

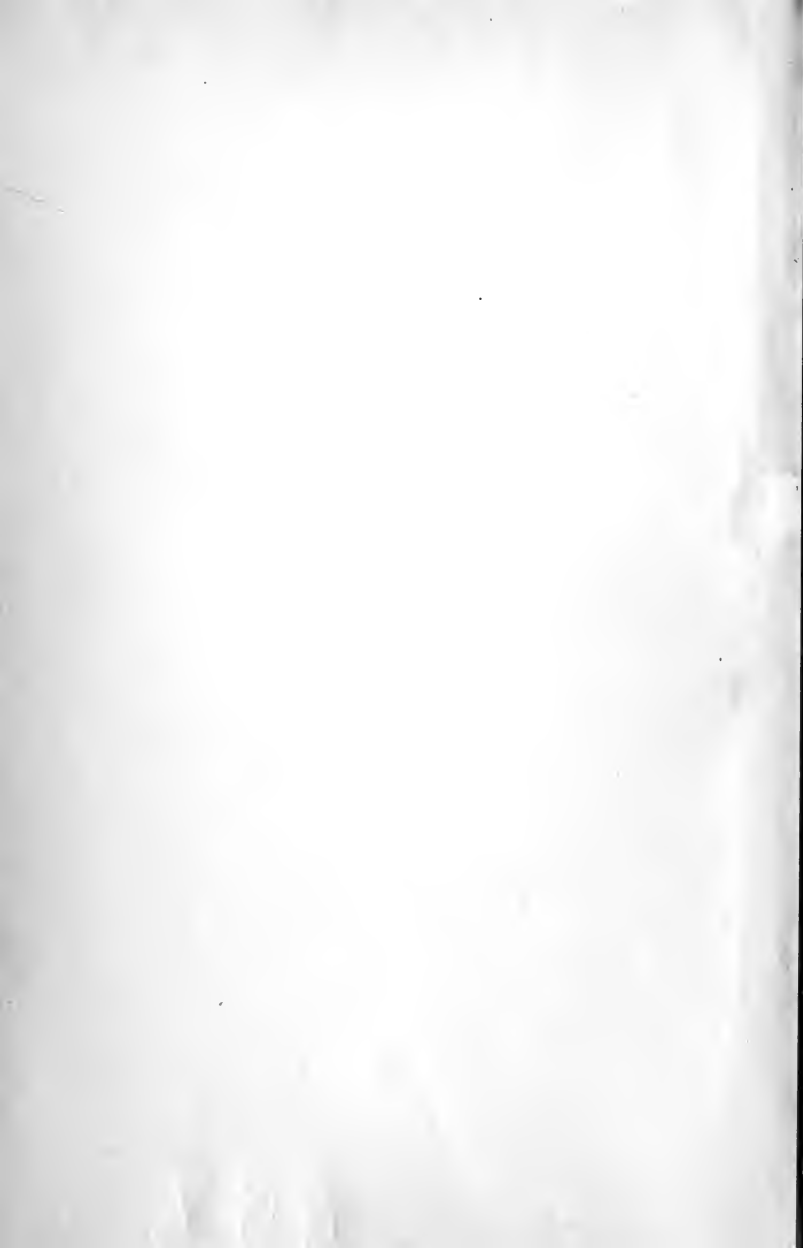
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PILOTS OF THE REPUBLIC

THE ROMANCE OF THE PIONEER
PROMOTER IN THE MIDDLE WEST

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE GLORY SEEKERS: The Romance of
Would-be Founders of Empire in the Early
Days of the Great Southwest. By **WILLIAM
HORACE BROWN.** With sixteen portraits, and
illustrative initials to chapters.

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ZEISBERGER PREACHING TO THE INDIANS

PILOTS OF THE REPUBLIC

THE ROMANCE OF THE PIONEER PROMOTER
IN THE MIDDLE WEST

BY

ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT

*Author of "Historic Highways of America," "Washington
and the West," etc.*

WITH SIXTEEN PORTRAITS, AND ILLUSTRATIVE INITIALS

BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT



CHICAGO

A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1906

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To
CHARLES G. DAWES, Esq.

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED
IN TOKEN OF THE AUTHOR'S APPRECIATION OF
A MODERN PROMOTER
WHOSE IDEALS AND CHIVALRY TAKE RANK
WITH THOSE OF THE OLDEN TIME

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PREFACE

THE student of European history is not surprised to find that individuals stand out prominently in every activity that occupied man's attention; that even though there be under consideration great popular movements, such as the Crusades or the Reformation or French Revolution, attention centres around significant personalities. In the day of monarchies and despotisms, individual initiative very naturally led the way in outlining policies, selecting lieutenants, finding ways and means.

It is singular to what a great extent this is true in the history of democratic America, preëminently the land where the people have ruled and where the usurper of power has had, comparatively, no opportunity whatever. And yet it is not too much to say that the history of our nation may be suggested in a skeleton way by a mere list of names, as, for instance, the history of the fourteenth century in Europe might easily be sketched. While we are proud to proclaim that America has given all men an equal opportunity, that the most humble may rise to the proudest position known among us, it yet remains singular

that in this land where the popular voice has ruled as nowhere else almost every national movement or phase of development may be signified by the name of one man.

This comes with appealing force to one who has attempted to make a catalogue of the men who have in a personal sense *led* the Star of Empire across this continent; men who have, in a way, pooled issues with their country in the mutual hope of personal advantage and national advance. It then becomes plain to the investigator, if he never realized it before, that, at times, the nation has waited, even halted in its progress, for a single man, or a set of men, to plan what may have seemed an entirely selfish adventure and which yet has proved to be a great national advantage. In certain instances there was a clear and fair understanding between such promoters and the reigning administration, looking toward mutual benefit. At times the movement was in direct defiance of law and order, with a resulting effect of immeasurable moment for good. Again, there may have been no thought of national welfare or extension; personal gain and success may have been the only end; and the resultant may have been a powerful national stimulus.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature that appears on an examination of American history along these lines (compared, for instance, with that of European powers) is that comparatively few leaders of military campaigns are to be classed among promoters who advanced national

ends in conjunction with personal ambitions. In the Old World numberless provinces came into the possession of military favorites after successful campaigns. In the many expeditions to the westward of the Alleghanies in America what commanders turned their attention later to the regions subdued? Forbes, the conqueror of Fort Duquesne, never saw the Ohio Valley again; Bouquet, the other hero, with Gladwin, of Pontiac's Rebellion, never returned to the Muskingum, nor did Gladwin come back to Detroit; Lewis, the victor at Point Pleasant, led no colony to the Ohio again; "Mad Anthony" Wayne never had other than military interest in the beautiful Maumee Valley, where, in the cyclone's path, he crushed the dream of a powerful Indian confederacy lying on the flanks of the new Republic. To a singular degree the leaders of the military vanguard across the continent had really little to do personally with the actual social movement that made the wilderness blossom as the rose. True, bounty lands were given to commanders and men in many instances, as in the case of Washington and George Rogers Clark; but it was the occupation of such tracts by the rank and file of the armies that actually made for advancement and national growth, and in perhaps only one case was the movement appreciably accelerated by the course of action pursued in a civil way by those who had been the leaders of a former military expansion. How are we to explain the interesting fact that none of the generals who led into the West the

armies that won it for America are to be found at the head, for instance, of the land companies that later attempted to open the West to the flood-tide of immigration? Did they know too well the herculean toils that such work demanded? Why should General Rufus Putnam, General Moses Cleaveland, General Benjamin Tupper, General Samuel Holden Parsons, Colonel Abraham Whipple,—famous leader of the night attack on the *Gaspee* in the pre-Revolutionary days,—Judge John Cleve Symmes, Colonel Richard Henderson, lead companies of men to settle in the region which Andrew Lewis, Arthur St. Clair, Joseph Harmar, Anthony Wayne, and William Henry Harrison had learned so well? Of course more than one reason, or one train of reasons, exist for these facts; but it is not to be denied that those best acquainted with the existing facts, those having the clearest knowledge of the trials, dangers, and risks, both as regards health and finances, were not in any degree prominent in the later social movements. Many, of course, were soldiers by profession, and itched not in the least for opportunity to increase their possessions by investment and speculation in a hazardous undertaking. But, had there been certain assurance of success, these men, or some of them, would, without doubt, have found ways and means of taking a part. Had one attempt proven successful, an impetus would have been given to other like speculations; yet one will look in vain for a really profitable outcome to any

undertaking described in these studies. The judgment of those best posted, therefore, was fully justified.

But at the same time the American nation was greatly in the debt of the men who made these poor investments; and, in one way or another, it came about that no great hardship resulted. This was no secret when these propositions were under consideration, and the men interested were influenced not a little by the fact that their adventure would result in benefit to the cause of national advance. There was a kind of patriotism then shown that is to be remembered by all who care to think of the steps taken by a weak, hopeful Republic; in some ways the same body politic is still weak, and vastly in need of a patriotism not less warm than that shown in those early days of wonderment and anxiety.

The reader of the succeeding pages may conceive that the author has not taken up each study in the same method, and judged the performances of each so-called "Pilot" by the same rule and standard. In the present instance the writer has considered that such treatment would be highly incongruous, there being almost nothing in common between the various exploits here reviewed, save only those that were incidental and adventitious. Each chapter may seem an independent study, related to that one following only through the general title that covers them all; this, in the author's opinion, is better far than to attempt to emphasize a likeness, or over-color

apparent resemblances, until each event may seem a natural sequence from a former. A babe's steps are seldom alike; one is long and inaccurate, another short and sure, with many a misstep and tumble, and the whole a characterless procedure bespeaking only weakness and lack both of confidence and knowledge. Such, in a measure, was the progress of young America in the early days of her national existence.

A. B. H.

MARIETTA COLLEGE,
MARIETTA, OHIO, May 31, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

The Part played in American History by the Pioneer's Axe. — Several Classes of Leaders in the Conquest of the Wilderness. — Patriotism even in those that were Self-seeking. — The Achievements of Cleaveland, Henderson, Putnam, Morris, and Astor, respectively. — Feebleness of the Republic in its Infancy. — Its need of Money. — The Pioneers were of all Races. — Other Leaders besides these Captains of Expansion accused of Self-seeking. — Washington as the Father of the West. — His great Acquisitions of Land. — His Influence on other Land-seekers. — Results of Richard Henderson's Advance into Kentucky. — Zeisberger's Attempt to form a Settlement of Christian Indians thwarted by the Revolution. — Rufus Putnam as a Soldier and a Pioneer. — As Leader of the Ohio Company of Associates, he makes a Settlement Northwest of the Ohio. — Three Avenues of Westward Migration: Henry Clay's Cumberland Road; the Erie Canal; the Baltimore and Ohio Railway. — These Avenues not laid between Cities, but into the Western Wilderness.



PILOTS OF THE REPUBLIC

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE BROTHER OF THE SWORD



THERE is some ground for the objection that is raised against allowing the history of America to remain a mere record of battles and campaigns. The sword had its part to play, a glorious part and picturesque,

but the pioneer's axe chanted a truer tune than ever musket crooned or sabre sang. And with reference to the history of our Central West, for instance, it were a gross impartiality to remember

the multicolored fascinating story of its preliminary conquest to the exclusion of the marvellous sequel — a great free people leaping into a wilderness and compelling it, in one short century, to blossom as the rose.

To any one who seriously considers the magic awakening of that portion of the American Nation dwelling between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, there must sooner or later come the overpowering realization that the humble woodsman's broadaxe — that famous "Brother of the Sword" — has a story that is, after all, as fascinating and romantic as any story ever told.

Lo, 't is myself I sing,
Feller of oak and ash!
Brother am I to the Sword,
Red-edged slayer of men!
Side by side we have hewn
Paths for the pioneer
From sea to sun-smitten sea.

It must be remembered that the sword made many conquests in this West, while the broadaxe made but one. France, and then England, possessed the West, but could not hold it, for the

vital reason that this brother of the sword did not march in unison with those armies. In fact, both France and England attempted to keep the axe-bearing, home-building people back in order that the furs and the treasure yielded by the forests might not be withheld. But when the sword of a free people came across the Alleghanies the axe of the pioneer came with it, and a miracle was wrought in a century's time beside which the Seven Wonders of the Old World must forever seem commonplace.

Of the men who led this army of real conquerors of the West to the scenes of their labors there were many. Some were leaders because of the inspiration they gave to others, some were leaders because they in person showed the way, enduring the toil, the privation, the pestilence, and the fate of pioneers. In whatever class these men may be placed, they were in reality patriots and heroes, even though at the time they were accused of seeking private gain and private fortune. But through the perspective of the years it seems clear that whatever may have been their

private ends, — good, bad, or indifferent, — they were extremely important factors in the progress of their age. Whether seeking lands as a private speculation, or founding land companies or transportation companies in conjunction with others, they turned a waiting people's genius in a new direction and gave force and point to a social movement that was of more than epoch-making importance. Whether it was a Cleaveland founding a Western Reserve on the Great Lakes, a Henderson establishing a Transylvania in Kentucky, a Putnam building a new New England on the Ohio River, a Morris advocating an Erie Canal, or an Astor founding an Astoria on the Pacific Sea, the personal ambition and hope of gain, so prominent at the time, does not now stand preëminent; in this day we see what the efforts of these men meant to a country whose destiny they almost seemed unwittingly to hold in their hands.

It will ever be difficult to realize what a critical moment it was when, for a brief space of time, only Providence could tell whether the

young American Republic was equal to the tremendous task of proving that it could live by growing. The wisest men who watched its cradle wondered if that babe, seemingly of premature birth, would live. But that was not the vital question; the vital question was, Could it grow? The infant Republic possessed a mere strip of land on the seaboard; the unanswerable argument of its enemies was that a weakling of such insignificant proportions, surrounded by the territories of England and Spain, could not live unless it could do more than merely exist; after winning (by default) a war for liberty, it must now fight and win or lose a war of extermination. And where were the millions of money, the men, and the arms to come from that should prevent final annihilation? The long war had prostrated the people; the land had been overrun with armies, farms despoiled, trade ruined, cities turned into barracks, money values utterly dissipated.

Just here it was that the mighty miracle was wrought; a strange army began to rendezvous,

and it was armed with that weapon which was to make a conquest the sword could never have made. It was the army of pioneers with axes on their shoulders. So spontaneously did it form and move away, so commonplace was every humble detail of its organization and progress, so quietly was its conquest made, so few were its prophets and historians, that it has taken a century for us to realize its wonder and its marvel.

America here and now gave the one proof of life — growth. Not from one point in particular, but from every point, the ranks of this humble army were filled; not one sect or race gave those rough and shaggy regiments their men, but every sect and every racial stock.

That army had its leaders, though they wore only the uncouth regimentals of the rank and file. It is of certain of these Pilots of the Republic that these pages treat, — men who were moved by what were very generally called selfish motives in their days. Yet against what human

motive may not the accusation of self-interest be cast? It has been hurled against almost every earnest man since Christ was crucified in ignominy nineteen centuries ago. Scan the list of men herein treated, and you will not find a single promoter of the Central West who was not accused of harboring an ulterior motive, if not of downright perfidy. Some of the best of these leaders of the expansion movement were most bitterly maligned; the heroic missionaries who forgot every consideration of health, comfort, worldly prosperity, home, and friends were sometimes decried as plotting ambassadors of scheming knaves.

The pure and upright Washington, looking westward with clearer eye and surer faith than any of his generation, was besmirched by the accusations of hypocritical self-aggrandizement. Yet he must stand first and foremost in the category of men who influenced and gave efficiency to that vital westward movement. This man, as will be shown, was more truly the "Father of the West" than he ever was "Father

of his Country." A decade before the Revolution was precipitated in sturdy Massachusetts, he had become fascinated with the commercial possibilities of the trans-Alleghany empire. He explored the Ohio and Great Kanawha rivers, and conceived what the future would bring forth; he took up large tracts of lands. Before he died he owned many patents to land in what is now New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, and Florida, as well as his home farms along the Potomac. He had a keen business sense, and demanded his full rights; he forcibly ousted from his lands men who knowingly usurped them; and all through the years he was accused of using his preponderating influence to further selfish plans; he was called a land-shark and a robber. It is interesting to know that his own private conclusion was that his investments had not paid; his words were that they had resulted more "in vexation than profit." And when he spoke those words he was master of between twenty and thirty thousand of the most fertile acres in the Ohio River basin.

Yet Washington had marvellously influenced the nation's destiny by these "unprofitable" investments. The very position he occupied and which he was accused of misusing had powerfully stimulated the army that was carrying the broadaxe westward. In countless ways this man had given circulation to ideas that were inspiring and hopeful, and just so far as he believed he had failed as a private speculator, he had in reality triumphed mightily as the leading exponent of a growing Republic which was called upon to prove that it could grow.

Richard Henderson stands out prominently as an honest leader of this army of conquerors. We can never read without a thrill the sentence in that letter of Daniel Boone's to Henderson in which the bold woodsman pleads the necessity of Henderson's hastening into Kentucky in 1775. All that Kentucky was and all that it did during the Revolution seems to have hung suspended on the advance of Richard Henderson's party through Cumberland Gap in that eventful April; and those words of the guide and trail-blazer,

Boone, imploring that there be no delay, and emphasizing the stimulating effect that Henderson's advance would have on the various parties of explorers, have a ring of destiny in them. True, Virginia and North Carolina both repudiated Henderson's Indian purchase, and the promoter of historic Transylvania was decried and defamed; but his advance into the valley of the Kentucky gave an inspiration to the scattered parties of vagrant prospectors that resulted in making a permanent settlement in that keystone State of the West, which was of untold advantage to the nation at large. And later Virginia and North Carolina made good the loss the founder of Transylvania had suffered because of their earlier repudiation.

In Washington and Henderson we have two important factors in the advance of the pioneer army into the old Southwest—the region between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi south of the Ohio River.

Turning to the rich empire lying north of that river, a chapter belongs to that resolute herald



DANIEL BOONE



of religious and social betterment, David Zeisberger, who led his faithful Moravians from Pennsylvania to found an ideal settlement in central Ohio. The marvellous story of the indomitable Catholic missionaries in America has been receiving something of its share of attention by the reading world, a story so noble and inspiring that it is one of the precious heritages of the past; that of the equally noble Protestant missionaries in the Middle and Far West has not yet received its due. The Moravian Brethren received the first acre of land ever legally owned by white men in Ohio. Here, in "the Meadow of Light" on the Tuscarawas River, Zeisberger and his noble comrade, John Heckewelder, attempted to found a civilized colony of Christian Indians. But for the Revolution, he would doubtless have succeeded. The story of his temporary success is of great romantic interest and of moment especially by way of comparison. A legal right to land was secured by this migrating colony of Indians under the leadership of white missionaries; it was to be, to

all intents and purposes, a white man's settlement, and agriculture was to be the colony's means of support. Laws and rules of conduct were formulated, and for five interesting years a great degree of success attended the effort. Then came war, despoliation, and a thrilling period of wandering. But never was the fact of legal ownership ignored; when the United States first enacted laws for the disposal of land in the Northwest Territory it excepted the district "formerly" allotted to the Moravian Brethren.

Again, the history of the Middle West contains no sturdier or sweeter character than Rufus Putnam, the head of the Ohio Company of Associates who made the first settlement in the Northwest Territory at Marietta. As evidence of what he was in time of danger, his long record in the old French War, the Revolution, and the Indian War in the West is open to all men; what he was in days of peace—how he was the mainstay of his fellow officers in their attempt to obtain their dues from Congress, how he cheered westward that little company

which he led in person, how for two decades he was the unselfish friend of hundreds of this struggling army of pioneers—is a story great and noble. As we shall see, General Washington, in a secret document never intended for other eyes than his own, describes Putnam as little known outside of a definite circle of friends. If this militated against his being appointed commander-in-chief of the American armies (for which honor General “Mad” Anthony Wayne was named), it made the man the more beloved and helpful. Not seeking in convivial ways the friendship of the notables of his time, Rufus Putnam went about the commonplace affairs of his conscientious life, doing good; yet in the most critical hour in the history of the Northwest it was to Putnam that Washington turned in confidence and hope. In the formation of the Ohio Company, in the emigration from New England, in the hard experiences of hewing out homes and clearings on the Ohio, and in the humble, wearing vicissitudes of life on the tumultuous frontier, the resolution, tact, and

patient charity of this plain hero made him one of the great men in the annals of our western land.

This Ohio Company of Associates made the first settlement in the territory northwest of the River Ohio, from which were created the five great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. In the actual peopling of that region no one man, perhaps, exerted the influence of Rufus Putnam; and though, as a company, the Associates never were able to keep their contract with the Government, the great value of the movement led by Putnam was recognized, as Virginia and North Carolina recognized Henderson's influence to the southward, and Congress agreed to an easy settlement.

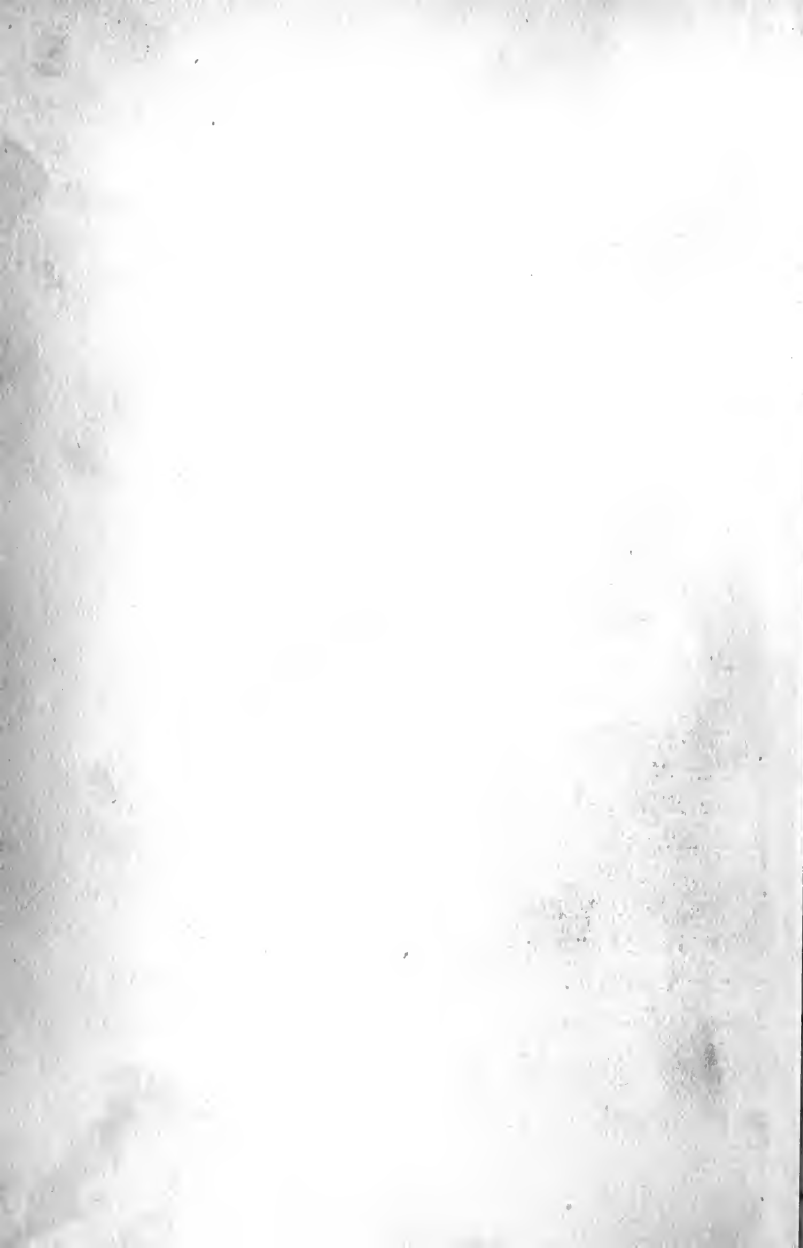
The empire of the Ohio Basin being thrown open to the world by the armies of pioneers inspired by Washington and led by such men as Henderson and Putnam, a great factor in its occupation were the men who succeeded Washington in carrying out his plan for opening avenues of immigration. Three great routes to the West, and their projectors, call for notice in this phase

of our study. The rise of Henry Clay's famous National Road running from Cumberland, Maryland, almost to St. Louis was a potent factor in the awakening of the West. It was the one great American highway; it took millions of men and wealth into the West, and, more than any material object, "served to cement and save the Union." Three canals were factors in this great social movement, especially the Erie Canal, which was conceived by the inspiration of Morris and achieved by the patient genius of Clinton. As a promoter of the West, Thomas, father of our first railway, must be accounted of utmost importance. Is it not of interest that the famed Cumberland Road was not built to connect two large Eastern cities, or a seaport or river with a city? It was built from the East into the Western wilderness — from a town but little known to an indefinite destination where the towns were hardly yet named. Its promoters were men of faith in the West, hopeful of its prosperity and anxious as to its loyalty. Now the same was singularly true of our first three great canals, the

Erie, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and the Pennsylvania. These were not built as avenues of commerce between great Eastern cities, but rather from the East to the awakening West, to the infant hamlets of Buffalo and Pittsburg. And, still more remarkable, our first railways were not laid out between large Eastern cities, but from the East into that same country of the setting sun where the forests were still spreading and little villages were here and there springing up. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was distinctly promoted in the hope that Baltimore might retain the trade of the West which the canals then building seemed to be likely to take from her. It was their faith in the West that inspired all these men to the tasks they severally conceived and enthusiastically completed. It would hardly be possible to emphasize sufficiently the part played in the history of early America by this supremely momentous intuition of the westward advance of the Republic, the divine logic of that advance, and its immeasurable consequences.

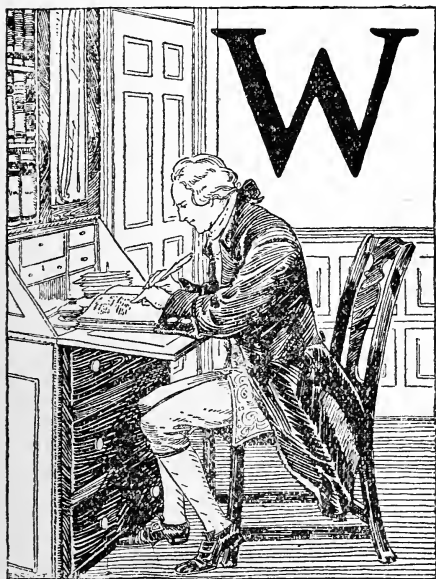
CHAPTER II

Washington's Prescience of the Increased Value of Land in the West. — Diary of his Tour in the Basin of the Ohio. — His Plans for the Commercial Development of the West. — His Character as manifested in his Letters, Diaries, and Memoranda. — His Military Advancement by the Influence of Lord Fairfax. — He serves at Fort Necessity, "The Bloody Ford," and Fort Duquesne. — Marriage and Settlement at Mount Vernon. — His Device for taking up more Land than the Law allowed to one Man. — Washington not connected with any of the great Land Companies. — His Efforts to secure for his Soldiers the Bounty-land promised them. — His sixth Journey to view his own Purchases. — The Amount of his Landed Property. — His Leniency toward Poor Tenants. — The Intensity of his Business Energy. — The Present Value of his Lands. — His Dissatisfaction with the Results of his Land Speculations. — His Plan of American Internal Improvements. — The Treaty that secured to Virginia the Territory South of the Ohio. — Washington's Personal Inspection of the Basins of the Ohio and Potomac. — He becomes President of the Potomac Company. — A Waterway secured from the Ohio to the Potomac. — The National Road from Cumberland, Md., to Wheeling on the Ohio.



CHAPTER II

WASHINGTON: THE PROMOTER OF WESTERN INVESTMENTS



WHAT story of personal endeavor that had a part in building up a new nation on this continent can appeal more strongly to us of the Middle West than that of George Washington's

shrewd faith which led him first to invest heavily in Western lands and signally champion that region as a field for exploitation? Indeed the record of that man's prescience in realizing what the West

would become, how it would be quickly populated, and how rapidly its acres would increase in value, is one of the most remarkable single facts in his history.

It is only because Washington became well known to a continent and a world as the leader of a people to freedom, that it has been easy to forget what a great man he still would have been had there been no Revolution and no Independence Day. How well known, for instance, is it that Washington was surveying lands on the Great Kanawha and Ohio rivers only four years before he received that remarkable ovation on his way to take command of the Continental Army under the Cambridge Elm? And how much attention has been given to Washington's tour into the Ohio Basin the very next year after the Revolutionary War to attempt to mark out a commercial route between the Virginia tide-water rivers and the Great Lakes by way of the Ohio and its tributaries? Yet the diary of that trip is not only the longest single literary production we have in our first President's hand-

writing, but on examination it is found to be almost a State paper, pointing out with wonderful sagacity the line of national expansion and hinting more plainly than any other document, not excepting the famous Ordinance, of the greatness of the Republic that was to be.

Washington was possibly the richest man in America, and half his wealth lay west of the Alleghanies ; it has not seemed to be easy to remember that this statesman had a better knowledge of the West than any man of equal position and that he spent a large portion of his ripest years in planning minutely for the commercial development of a territory then far less known to the common people of the country than Alaska is to us of to-day.

To few men's private affairs has a nation had more open access than we have had to George Washington's. His journals, diaries, letters, and memoranda have been published broadcast, and the curious may learn, if they choose, the number of kerchiefs the young surveyor sent to his washerwoman long before his name was known outside his own county, or what the

butter bill was for a given month at the Executive Mansion during the administration of our first President. Many men noted for their strength of personality and their patriotism have suffered some loss of character when their private affairs have been subjected to a rigid examination. Not so with Washington. It is a current legend in the neighborhood where he resided that he was exceedingly close-handed. This is not borne out in a study of his land speculations. Here is one of the interesting phases of the story of his business life, his generosity and his thoughtfulness for the poor who crowded upon his far-away choice lands. Beyond this the study is of importance because it touches the most romantic phase of Western history, the mad struggle of those who participated in that great burst of immigration across the Alleghanies just before and just after the Revolutionary War.

The hand of Providence cannot be more clearly seen in any human life than in Washington's when he was turned from the sea and sent into the Alleghanies to survey on the south

branch of the Potomac for Lord Fairfax, in 1748 ; it seemed unimportant, perhaps, at the moment whether the youth should follow his brother under Admiral Vernon or plunge into the forests along the Potomac. But had his mother's wish not been obeyed our West would have lost a champion among a thousand. As it was, Washington, in the last two years of the first half of the eighteenth century, began to study the forests, the mountains, and the rivers in the rear of the colonies. The mighty silences thrilled the young heart, the vastness of the stretching wilderness made him sober and thoughtful. He came in touch with great problems at an early and impressionable age, and they became at once life-problems with him. The perils and hardships of frontier life, the perplexing questions of lines and boundaries, of tomahawk and squatter claims, the woodland arts that are now more than lost, the ways and means of life and travel in the borderland, the customs of the Indians and their conceptions of right and wrong, all these and more were the problems this tall boy was

fortunately made to face as the first step toward a life of unparalleled activity and sacrifice.

The influence of Lord Fairfax, whom he served faithfully, now soon brought about Washington's appointment as one of four adjutant-generals of Virginia. In rapid order he pushed to the front. In 1753 his governor sent him on the memorable journey to the French forts near Lake Erie, and in the following year he led the Virginia regiment and fought and lost the Fort Necessity campaign. The next year he marched with Braddock to the "Bloody Ford" of the Monongahela. For three years after this terrible defeat Washington was busy defending the Virginia frontier, and in 1758 he went to the final conquest of Fort Duquesne with the dying but victorious Forbes.

Having married Martha Custis, the young colonel now settled down at Mount Vernon, and his diary of 1760 shows how closely he applied himself to the management of his splendid estate. But the forests in and beyond the Alleghanies, which he had visited on five occasions before he

was twenty-six years of age, were closely identified with his plans, and it is not surprising that as early as 1767 we find the young man writing a hasty letter concerning Western investments to William Crawford, a comrade-in-arms in the campaign of 1758, who lived near the spot where Braddock's old road crossed the Youghioghny River.

From this letter, written September 21, 1767, it is clear that Washington had determined to make heavy investments. "My plan is to secure a good deal of land," he wrote. He desired land in Pennsylvania as near Pittsburg as possible; if the law did not allow one man to take up several thousand acres, Crawford was requested to make more than one entry, the total to aggregate the desired amount. As to quality, Washington was to the point.

"It will be easy for you to conceive that ordinary or even middling lands would never answer my purpose or expectation; . . . a tract to please me must be rich . . . and, if possible, level."

As to location, he was not concerned :

“For my own part, I should have no objection to a grant of land upon the Ohio, a good way below Pittsburg, but would first willingly secure some valuable tracts nearer at hand.”

Washington correctly estimated the purpose and effectiveness of the King's proclamation of 1763. This proclamation, at the close of Pontiac's rebellion, declared that no land should be settled beyond the heads of the Atlantic waters. In the same letter he said :

“I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but I say this between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians. . . . Any person, therefore, who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for his own, in order to keep others from settling them, will never regain it.”

Washington was first and foremost in the field and intended to make the most of his opportunities. He wrote :

“If the scheme I am now proposing to you were known, it might give alarm to others, and by putting them upon

a plan of the same nature, before we could lay a proper foundation for success ourselves, set the different interests clashing, and, probably, in the end overturn the whole. All this may be avoided by a silent management, and the operation carried on by you under the guise of hunting game.”

Crawford accordingly took tracts for Washington near his own lands on the Youghioghenny, costing “from a halfpenny to a penny an acre.”

Note that at this early day (1767), almost all the land between the Youghioghenny and Monongahela rivers — the country through which Braddock’s Road ran — was already taken up. A large tract on Chartier’s Creek was secured by Crawford for his friend. Within five years Washington had come into the additional possession of the historic tract of two hundred and thirty-seven acres known as Great Meadows, — whereon he had fought his first battle and signed the first and only capitulation of his life, — and the splendid river-lands known to-day as “Washington’s Bottoms,” on the Ohio near Wheeling and Parkersburg, West Virginia, and below.

It is a very interesting fact that Washington did not belong to any of the great land companies which, one after another, sought to gain and hold great tracts of land, except the Mississippi Company which did not materialize. His brothers were members of the Ohio Company which in 1749 secured a grant of two hundred thousand acres between the Monongahela and Kanawha rivers. The company was never able to people and hold its territory, and the proprietors each lost heavily. It is a little strange that Washington had nothing to do with Walpole's Grant, the Transylvania Company, or the later Ohio, Scioto, and Symmes companies.

What might be considered an exception to this rule was the body of men (among whom Washington was a generous, fearless leader) which sought to secure for the Virginia soldiers of the Fort Necessity campaign the bounty-land promised them by Governor Dinwiddie in 1754. Year after year, for twenty years, Washington was continually besieged by the soldiers he led West in 1754 or their relatives, who implored

his aid in securing the grant of land promised, and there is no more interesting phase of his life during these years than his patient persistence in compelling Virginia to make good her solemn pledge. To impatient and impertinent men such as Colonel Mercer he wrote scathing rebukes; to helpless widows and aged veterans he sent kind messages of hope and cheer.

The trouble was that everybody was claiming the land beyond the Alleghanies; the Ohio Company was fighting for its rights until the London agent questionably formed a merger with the Walpole Grant speculators. This company had claimed all the land between the Monongahela and the Kanawha. Washington, accordingly, had attempted to secure the two hundred thousand acres for his Fort Necessity comrades on the western shore of the Kanawha. In 1770 he made his sixth western journey in order to view his own purchases and make a beginning in the business of securing the soldiers' lands. He left Mount Vernon October 5 and reached William Crawford's, on the Youghiogheny, on

the thirteenth. On the sixteenth Washington visited his sixteen-hundred acre tract near by and was pleased with it. On the third of November he blazed four trees on the Ohio, near the mouth of the Great Kanawha. He wrote :

“ At the beginning of the bottom above the junction of the rivers, and at the mouth of a branch on the east side, I marked two maples, an elm, and hoop-wood tree, as a corner of the soldiers' land (if we can get it), intending to take all the bottom from hence to the rapids in the Great Bend into one survey. I also marked at the mouth of another run lower down on the west side, at the lower end of the long bottom, an ash and hoop-wood for the beginning of another of the soldiers' surveys, to extend up so as to include all the bottom in a body on the west side.”

From this time on Crawford was busy surveying for Washington, either privately or in behalf of the soldiers' lands, until the outbreak of Dunmore's War in 1774. For these bounty-land surveys, Washington was particularly attentive, writing Crawford frequently “in behalf of the whole officers and soldiers, and beg of you

to be attentive to it, as I think our interest is deeply concerned in the event of your dispatch.”

When Walpole's Grant was confirmed by King George, Washington greatly feared the loss of the lands promised to himself and his comrades of 1754. His own share was five thousand acres, and he had purchased an equal amount from others who, becoming hopeless, offered their claims for sale. This grant was bounded on the west by the old war-path which ran from the mouth of the Scioto River to Cumberland Gap. Accordingly, in September, 1773, Washington wrote Crawford to go down the Ohio below the Scioto. Washington did not know then that the purchasers of Walpole's Grant had agreed to set apart two hundred thousand acres for the heroes of 1754. It is significant that he was particular to avoid all occasion for conflicting claims; he originally wanted the soldiers' surveys to be made beyond the Ohio Company's Grant; later beyond the Walpole Grant. And while war and other causes put a disastrous end to the work of the promoters of all the various land companies

with which Washington had nothing to do, the soldiers' lands were saved to them, and all received their shares. Washington also retained his private lands surveyed by Crawford, and owned most of them in 1799, when he died. In 1784, Washington had patents for thirty thousand acres and surveys for ten thousand more. Briefly, his possessions may be described as ten thousand acres on the south bank of the Ohio between Wheeling and Point Pleasant, West Virginia, and twenty thousand acres in the Great Kanawha Valley, beginning three miles above its mouth, "on the right and left of the river, and bounded thereby forty-eight miles and a half."

Washington's ethics and his enterprise with reference to his Western speculations were both admirable, but we can only hint of them here. He was strict with himself and with others, but he knew how to be lenient when leniency would not harm the recipient. To his later agent, Thomas Freeman (Crawford was captured and put to death by the Indians in 1782), he wrote

in 1785: "Where acts of Providence interfere to disable a tenant, I would be lenient in the exaction of rent, but when the cases are otherwise, I will not be put off; because it is on these my own expenditures depend, and because an accumulation of undischarged rents is a real injury to the tenant." While his agents were ordered to use all legal precautions against allowing his lands to be usurped by others, Washington was particular that needy people, stopping temporarily, should not be driven off; and he was exceedingly anxious from first to last that no lands should be taken up for him that were anywise claimed by others. It is a fact that Washington had few disputes in a day when disputes over lands and boundaries were as common as sunrise and sunset. No landholder in the West had so little trouble in proportion to the amount of land owned.

The intensity of Washington's business energy is not shown more plainly than by his enterprise in finding and exploiting novelties. One day he was studying the question of rotation of

crops; the next found him laboring all day with his blacksmith fashioning a newfangled plough. The next day he spent, perhaps, in studying a plan of a new machine invented in Europe to haul trees bodily out of the ground, an invention which meant something to a man who owned thirty thousand acres of primeval forest. He ordered his London agent to send on one of these machines regardless of cost, if they were really able to do the feats claimed. Again he was writing Tilghman at Philadelphia concerning the possibility and advisability of importing palatines from Europe, with which to settle his Western farms. Now he was examining veins of coal along the Youghiogheny and experimenting with it, or studying the location of salt-springs and the manufacture of salt, which in the West was twice dearer than flour. A whole essay could be devoted to Washington's interest in mineral springs at Saratoga, Rome, New York, and in the West, and to his plan outlined to the president of the Continental Congress to have the United States retain possession of all lands lying

immediately about them. We do not know who built the first grist-mill west of the Alleghanies, but it is doubtful if there was another save Washington's at Perryopolis, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, before the Revolutionary War. "I assure you," wrote Crawford, "it is the best mill I ever saw anywhere, although I think one of a less value would have done as well." It is the boast of Ohioans that the millstones for the first mill in the old Northwest were "packed" over the mountains from Connecticut. Washington might have boasted, a score of years earlier, that he had found his millstones right in the Alleghanies, and they were "equal to English burr," according to his millwright. The mill which is still in operation on Washington's Run is on the original site of the one built by him in 1775. Portions of the original structure remain in the present mill, and it is known far and wide by the old name. The water-power, which is no longer relied upon except during wet seasons, still follows the same mill-race used in Revolutionary days, and the reconstructed dam is on

the old site. The improvements on Washington's plantation here, overseer's house, slave quarters, etc., were situated near Plant No. 2 of the Washington Coal and Coke Company. It is known that Washington became interested in the coal outcropping here, but it is safe to say that he little dreamed that the land he purchased with that lying contiguous to it would within a century be valued at twenty million dollars. In view of the enormous value of this territory, it is exceedingly interesting to know that Washington was its first owner, and that he found coal there nearly a century and a half ago. ✓

In 1784 Washington issued a circular offering his Western lands to rent :

“These lands may be had on three tenures : First, until January, 1790, and no longer. Second, until January, 1795, renewable every ten years for ever. Third, for nine hundred and ninety-nine years.”

The conditions included clearing five new acres every year for each hundred leased and the erection of buildings within the time of lease.

The staple commodity was to be medium of exchange. The seventh condition is interesting:

“These conditions &c. being common to the leases of three different tenures, the rent of the first, will be Four Pounds per annum, for every hundred acres contained in the lease, and proportionably for a greater or lesser quantity; of the second, One Shilling for every acre contained in the lease until the year 1795, One Shilling and Sixpence for the like quantity afterwards till the year 1815, and the like increase per acre for every ten years, until the rent amounts to and shall have remained at Five Shillings for the ten years next ensuing, after which it is to increase Threepence per acre every ten years for ever; of the Third, Two Shillings for every acre therein contained, at which it will stand for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, the term for which it is granted.”

Five years before his death Washington resolved to dispose of his Western lands. The investments had not been so profitable as he had hoped. As early as June 16, 1794, he wrote Presley Neville:

“From the experience of many years, I have found distant property in land more pregnant of perplexities than profit. I have therefore resolved to sell all I hold

on the Western waters, if I can obtain the prices which I conceive their quality, their situation, and other advantages would authorize me to expect.”

A circular advertising his Western lands was issued in Philadelphia, dated February 1, 1796. It described 32,317 acres in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky for sale; the terms were one-fourth payment down, and the remainder to be paid in five years with interest “annually and punctually paid.”

With this story of Washington’s acquaintance with the West and his speculations there in mind, it is now possible to take up, knowingly, the great result to which they led—the first grand plan of American internal improvements, of which Washington was the father.

As early as 1754, Washington, then just come of age, made a detailed study of the Potomac River, and described in a memorandum all the difficulties and obstructions to be overcome in rendering that river navigable from tide-water to Fort Cumberland (Cumberland, Maryland). At the time of Washington’s entrance into the

House of Burgesses in 1760, the matter of a way of communication between the colonies and the territory then conquered from France beyond the Alleghanies was perhaps uppermost in his mind, but various circumstances compelled a postponement of all such plans, particularly the outrageous proclamation of 1763, which was intended to repress the Western movement.

By 1770 conditions were changed. In 1768 the Treaty of Fort Stanwix had nominally secured to Virginia all the territory south of the Ohio River, the very land from which the proclamation of 1763 excluded her.

On July 20 of this year, Washington wrote to Thomas Johnson, the first State Governor of Maryland, suggesting that the project of opening the Potomac River be "recommended to the public notice upon a more enlarged plan [*i. e.*, including a portage to the Ohio Basin] and as a means of becoming the channel of conveyance of the extensive and valuable trade of a rising empire." Johnson had written Washington concerning the navigation of the Potomac;

in this reply Washington prophesied the failure of any plan to improve the Potomac that did not include a plan to make it an avenue of communication between the East and the West. He also prophesied that, if this were not done, Pennsylvania or New York would improve the opportunity of getting into commercial touch with that "rising empire" beyond the Alleghanies, "a tract of country which," he wrote, "is unfolding to our view, the advantages of which are too great, and too obvious, I should think, to become the subject of serious debate, but which, through ill-timed parsimony and supineness, may be wrested from us and conducted through other channels, such as the Susquehanna."

These words of Washington's had a significance contained in no others uttered in that day, hinting of a greater America of which few besides this man were dreaming. They sounded through the years foretelling the wonder of our time, the making of the empire of the Mississippi Basin. Far back in his youth, this man had sounded

the same note of alarm and enthusiasm: "A pusillanimous behavior now will ill suit the times," he cried to Governor Dinwiddie just after Braddock's defeat, when a red tide of pillage and murder was setting over the mountains upon Virginia and Pennsylvania. During the fifteen years now past Washington had visited the West, and understood its promise and its needs, and now the binding of the East and the West became at once his dearest dream.

Believing the time had come Washington, in 1774, brought before the Virginia House of Burgesses a grand plan of communication which called for the improvement of the Potomac and the building of a connection from that river to one of the southwest tributaries of the Ohio. Only the outbreak of the Revolution could have thwarted the measure; in those opening hours of war it was forgotten, and it was not thought of again until peace was declared seven years later.

We know something of Washington's life in those years — his ceaseless application to details,

his total abandonment of the life he had learned to know and love on the Mount Vernon farms, the thousand perplexities, cares, and trials which he met so patiently and nobly. But in those days of stress and hardship the cherished plan of youth and manhood could not be forgotten. Even before peace was declared, Washington left his camp at Newburg, and at great personal risk made a tour through the Mohawk Valley, examining the portages between the Mohawk and Wood Creek, at Rome, New York, and between Lake Otsego and the Mohawk at Canajoharie. These routes by the Susquehanna and Mohawk to the Lakes were the rival routes of the James and Potomac westward, and Washington was greatly interested in them. He was no narrow partisan. Returning from this trip, he wrote the Chevalier de Chastellux from Princeton, October 12, 1783 :

“ Prompted by these actual observations, I could not help taking a more extensive view of the vast inland navigation of these United States and could not but be struck with the immense extent and importance of it, and with

the goodness of that Providence which has dealt its favors to us with so profuse a hand. Would to God we may have wisdom enough to improve them! I shall not rest contented till I have explored the western country, and traversed those lines, or great part of them, which have given bounds to a new empire."

There is something splendid suggested by these words. Though he knew, perhaps better than any man, the pitiful condition of the country, there is here no note of despair, but rather a cry of enthusiasm. The leader of the armies was now to become a leader of a people, and at the outset his eye is uplifted and his faith great. With prophetic genius his face, at the close of his exhausting struggle, is turned toward the West. It is certain that Washington could not have known what a tremendous influence the new West was to have in the perplexing after hours of that critical period of our history. Perhaps he judged better what it would be partly for the reason that its very existence had furnished a moral support to him in times of darkness and despair; he always remembered those valleys

and open meadows where the battles of his boyhood had been fought, and the tradition that he would have led the Continental army thither in case of final defeat may not be unfounded. Whether he knew aught of the wholesome part the West was to play in our national development or not, two things are very clear to-day: the West, and the opportunity to occupy it, were the "main chance" of the spent colonies at the end of that war; and if Washington had known all that we know at this day, he certainly could not have done much more than he did to bring about the welding and cementing of the East and the West, which now meant to each other more than ever before. He again utters practically the old cry of his youth: "A pusillanimous behavior now will ill suit the times." And the emphasis is on the "now."

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Washington, soon after reaching Mount Vernon, at the close of the war, determined on another western journey. The ostensible reason for the trip was to look after his lands, but from the

journal of the traveller it is easy to see that the important result of the trip was a personal inspection of the means of communication between the various branches of the Ohio and the Potomac, which so nearly interlock in southwestern Pennsylvania and northeastern West Virginia. It must be remembered that in that day river navigation was considered the most practical form of transportation. All the rivers of Virginia, great and small, were the highways of the tobacco industry; the rivers of any colony were placed high in an inventory of the colony's wealth, not only because they implied fertility, but because they were the great avenues of trade. The first important sign of commercial awakening in the interior of the colonies was the improvement of the navigable rivers and the highways.

In less than thirty-three days Washington travelled nearly seven hundred miles on horseback in what is now Pennsylvania and West Virginia.¹ That he did not confine his explorations

¹ Washington's diary of this journey is printed in full in Hulbert, "Washington and the West," 27-105.

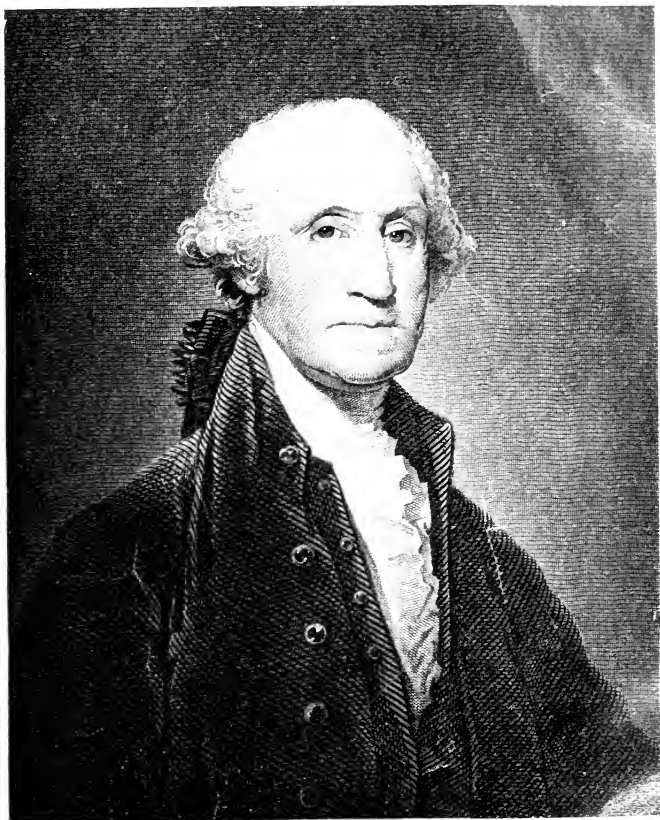
to the travelled ways is evident from his itinerary through narrow, briery paths, and his remaining for at least one night upon a Virginian hillside, where he slept, as in earlier years, beside a camp-fire and covered only by his cloak. His original intention was to go to the Great Kanawha, where much of his most valuable land lay, and after transacting his business, to return by way of the New River into Virginia. But it will be remembered that after the Revolutionary War closed in the East, the bloodiest of battles were yet to be fought in the West; and even in 1784, such was the condition of affairs on the frontier, it did not seem safe for Washington to go down the Ohio. He turned, therefore, to the rough lands at the head of the Monongahela, in the region of Morgantown, West Virginia, and examined carefully all evidence that could be secured touching the practicability of opening a great trunk line of communication between East and West by way of the Potomac and Monongahela rivers. The navigation of the headwaters of the two streams

was the subject of special inquiry, and then, in turn, the most practicable route for a portage or a canal between them.

From any point of view this hard, dangerous tour of exploration must be considered most significant. Washington had led his ragged armies to victory, England had been fought completely to a standstill, and the victor had returned safely to the peace and quiet of his Mount Vernon farms amid the applause of two continents. And then, in a few weeks, we find the same man with a single attendant beating his way through the tangled trails in hilly West Virginia, inspecting for himself and making diligent inquiry from all he met concerning the practicability of the navigation of the upper Monongahela and the upper Potomac. Russia can point to Peter's laboring in the Holland ship-yards with no more pride than that with which we can point to Washington pushing his tired horse through the wilderness about Dunkard's Bottom on the Cheat River in 1784. If through the knowledge and determination of Peter the

Russian Empire became strong, then as truly from the clear-visioned inspiration of Washington came the first attempts to bind our East and West into one—a union on which depended the very life of the American Republic. Here and now we find this man firmly believing truths and theories which became the adopted beliefs of a whole nation but a few years later.

Returning to Mount Vernon, Washington immediately penned one of the most interesting and important letters written in America during his day and generation,—“that classic, Washington’s Letter to Benjamin Harrison, 1784,” as it is styled in the “Old South Leaflets.” In this letter he voices passionately his plea for binding a fragmentary nation together by the ties of interstate communion and commerce. His plan included the improvement of the Potomac and one of the heads of the Monongahela, and building a solid portage highway between these waterways. His chief argument was that Virginia ought to be the first in the field to secure the trade of the West; with



GEORGE WASHINGTON



keener foresight than any other man of his day, Washington saw that the trans-Alleghany empire would be filled with people "faster than any other ever was, or any one would imagine." Not one of all the prophecies uttered during the infancy of our Republic was more marvelously fulfilled. The various means by which this was accomplished changed more rapidly than any one could have supposed, but every change brought to pass more quickly that very marvel which he had foretold to a wondering people only half awake to its greater duty. His final argument was prophetically powerful: he had done what he could to lead his people to freedom from proprietaries and lords of trade. How free now would they be?

He wrote:

"No well informed Mind need be told, that the flanks and rear of the United territory are possessed by other powers, and formidable ones too — nor how necessary it is to apply the cement of interest to bind all parts of it together, by one indissoluble bond — particularly the middle states with the Country immediately back of them

— for what ties let me ask, should we have upon those people; and how entirely unconnected sho^d we be with them if the Spaniards on their right or great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling blocks in their way as they now do, should invite their trade and seek alliances with them?— What, when they get strength, which will be sooner than is generally imagined (from the emigration of Foreigners who can have no predeliction for us, as well as from the removal of our own Citizens) may be the consequence of their having formed such connections and alliances, requires no uncommon foresight to predict.

“The Western Settlers — from my own observation — stand as it were on a pivot — the touch of a feather would almost incline them any way — they looked down the Mississippi until the Spaniards (very impolitically I think for themselves) threw difficulties in the way, and for no other reason that I can conceive than because they glided gently down the stream, without considering perhaps the tediousness of the voyage back, & the time necessary to perform it in; — and because they have no other means of coming to us but by a long land transportation & unimproved Roads.

“A combination of circumstances make the present conjuncture more favorable than any other to fix the trade of the Western Country to our Markets. — The jealous & untoward disposition of the Spaniards on one side, and

the private views of some individuals coinciding with the policy of the Court of G. Britain on the other, to retain the posts of Oswego, Niagara, Detroit &c^a (which tho' done under the letter of the treaty is certainly an infrac-tion of the Spirit of it, & injurious to the Union) may be improved to the greatest advantage by this State if she would open her arms, & embrace the means which are necessary to establish it—The way is plain, & the ex-pence, comparatively speaking deserves not a thought, so great would be the prize—The Western Inhabitants would do their part towards accomplishing it, — weak, as they now are, they would, I am persuaded meet us half way rather than be *driven* into the arms of, or be in any wise dependent upon, foreigners; the consequences of which would be, a seperation, or a War. —

“The way to avoid both, happily for us, is easy, and dictated by our clearest interest. —It is to open a wide door, and make a smooth way for the Produce of that Country to pass to our Markets before the trade may get into another channel —this, in my judgment, would dry up the other Sources; or if any part should flow down the Mississippi, from the Falls of the Ohio, in Vessels which may be built —fitted for Sea — & sold with their Cargoes, the proceeds I have no manner of doubt, will return this way; & that it is better to prevent an evil than to rectify a mistake none can deny — commercial, connections, of all others, are most difficult to dissolve — if

we wanted proof of this, look to the avidity with which we are renewing, after a *total* suspension of eight years, our correspondence with Great Britain ; — So, if we are supine, and suffer without a struggle the Settlers of the Western Country to form commercial connections with the Spaniards, Britons, or with any of the States in the Union we shall find it a difficult matter to dissolve them altho' a better communication should, thereafter, be presented to them — time only could effect it; such is the force of habit! —

“ Rumseys discovery of working Boats against stream, by mechanical powers principally, may not only be considered as a fortunate invention for these States in general but as one of those circumstances which have combined to render the present epoche favorable above all others for securing (if we are disposed to avail ourselves of them) a large portion of the produce of the Western Settlements, and of the Fur and Peltry of the Lakes, also. — the importation of which alone, if there were no political considerations in the way, is immense. —

“ It may be said, perhaps, that as the most direct Routs from the Lakes to the Navigation of Potomack are through the State of Pennsylvania ; — and the inter^t of that State opposed to the extension of the Waters of Monongahela, that a communication cannot be had either by the Yohiogany or Cheat River ; — but herein I differ. — an application to this purpose would, in my opinion, place

the Legislature of that Commonwealth in a very delicate situation. — That it would not be pleasing I can readily conceive, but that they would refuse their assent, I am by no means clear in. — There is, in that State, at least one hundred thousand Souls West of the Laurel hill, who are groaning under the inconveniences of a long land transportation. — They are wishing, indeed looking, for the extension of inland Navigation ; and if this can not be made easy for them to Philadelphia — at any rate it must be lengthy — they will seek a Mart elsewhere ; and none is so convenient as that which offers itself through Yohiogany or Cheat River. — the certain consequences therefore of an attempt to restrain the extension of the Navigation of these Rivers, (so consonant with the interest of these people) or to impose any extra : duties upon the exports, or imports, to, or from another State, would be a seperation of the Western Settlers from the old & more interior government ; towards which there is not wanting a disposition at this moment in the former.”

Thus the old dream of the youth is brought forward again by the thoughtful, sober man ; these words echo the spirit of Washington’s whole attitude toward the West — its wealth of buried riches, its commercial possibilities, its swarming colonies of indomitable pioneers. Here

was the first step toward solving that second most serious problem that faced the young nation: How can the great West be held and made to strengthen the Union? France and England had owned and lost it. Could the new master, this infant Republic, "one nation to-day, thirteen to-morrow," do better? Ay, but England and France had no seer or adviser so wise as this man. This letter from Washington to Harrison was our nation's pioneer call to the vastly better days (poor as they now seem) of improved river navigation, the first splendid economic advance that heralded the day of the canal and the national highway. For fifty years, until President Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road Bill, the impetus of this appeal, made in 1784, was of vital force in forming our national economic policies. This letter has frequently been pointed to as the inspiring influence which finally gave birth to the Erie Canal and the Cumberland National Road.

The immediate result of this agitation was the formation of the celebrated Potomac Company

under joint resolutions passed by Virginia and Maryland. Washington was at once elected to the presidency of this company, an office he filled until his election to the presidency of the United States five years later (1789). The plan of the Potomac Company was to improve the navigation of the Potomac to the most advantageous point on its headwaters and build a twenty-mile portage road to Dunkard's Bottom on the Cheat River. With the improvement of the Cheat and Monongahela rivers, a waterway, with a twenty-mile portage, was secured from the Ohio to tide-water on the Potomac.

Washington's plan, however, did not stop here. This proposed line of communication was not to stop at the Ohio, but the northern tributaries of that river were to be explored and rendered navigable, and portage roads were to be built between them and the interlocking streams which flowed into the Great Lakes. With the improvement of these waterways, in their turn, a complete trunk line of communication was thus established from the Lakes to the sea.

Washington spent no little time in endeavoring to secure the best possible information concerning the nature of the northern tributaries of the Ohio, the Beaver, the Muskingum, the Scioto, and the Miami, and of the lake streams, the Grand, the Cuyahoga, the Sandusky, and the Maumee. It was because of such conceptions as these that all the portage paths of the territory northwest of the Ohio River were declared by the famous Ordinance of 1787, "common highways forever free."

The Potomac Company fared no better than the other early companies which attempted to improve the lesser waterways of America before the method of slackwater navigation was discovered. It made, however, the pioneer effort in a cause which meant more to its age than we can readily imagine to-day, and in time it built the great and successful Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, as the early attempts to render the Mohawk River navigable were the first chapters in the history of the famed Erie Canal. These efforts of Washington's constitute likewise the first

chapter of the building of our one great national road. This highway, begun in 1811, and completed to the Ohio River in 1818, was practically the portage path which was so important a link in Washington's comprehensive plan. Its starting point was Cumberland, Maryland, on the Potomac, and it led to Brownsville, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela, and Wheeling on the Ohio. All of these points were famous ports in the days when that first burst of immigration swept over the Alleghanies. Washington's plan for a bond of union between East and West was also the first chapter of the story of throwing the first railway across the Alleghanies. "I consider this among the most important acts of my life," said Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, when with the stroke of a pen he laid the first foundation for the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, "second only to my signing the Declaration of Independence, if even it be second to that."

Washington's dream of an empire of united States bound together by a "chain of federal union" was enlarged and modified by the

changing needs of a nation, but in its vital essence it was never altered. "It would seem," wrote the late Herbert B. Adams, "as though, in one way or another, all lines of our public policy lead back to Washington, as all roads lead to Rome." And yet, after all, I believe there are other words which sound a note that should never die in the ears of his people, and those are his own youthful words, "A pusillanimous behavior now will ill suit the times."

It is not easy to pass this subject without referring to Washington's remarkably wise foresight with reference to the West and national growth which his experience with that part of the country gave him. True, he made some miscalculations, as when he expressed the opinion that New York would not improve her great route to the West (Mohawk River route) until the British had given up their hold on the Great Lakes; he however pointed to that route as one of the most important in America and hardly expected more from it than has been realized. In all phases of the awakening of the West—the Mississippi

question, the organization of the Northwest Territory, the formulating of the Ordinance of 1787 ("the legal outcome of Maryland's successful policy in advocating National Sovereignty over the Western Lands"), the ceding of lands to the National Government, the handling of the Indian problem — Washington's influence and knowledge were of paramount usefulness. Take these instances of his prescience as yet unmentioned: he suggested, in connection with the Potomac improvement, the policy of exploration and surveys which our government has steadily adhered to since that day; the Lewis and Clark expedition was a result of this policy advocated first by Washington. Again, note Washington's singularly wise opinion on the separation of Kentucky from Virginia. Writing to Jefferson in 1785, he affirms that the general opinion in his part of Virginia is unfavorable to the separation. "I have uniformly given it as mine," he wrote, "to meet them upon their own ground, draw the best line, and make the best terms we can, and part good friends." And again, it is to the point to notice

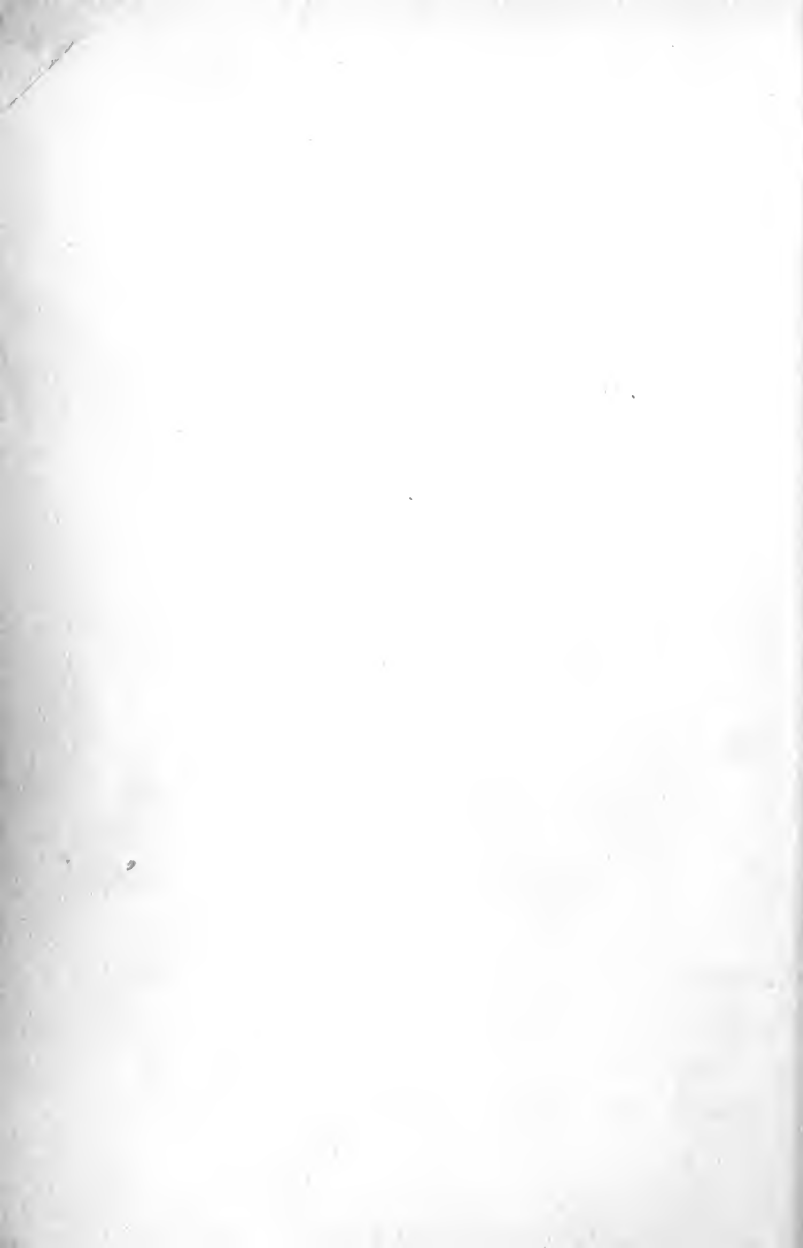
Washington's far-seeing view of the progress and enterprise of the West in relation to commerce. Who before him ever had the temerity to suggest that ships would descend the Ohio River and sail for foreign ports ?¹ Yet he said this in 1784 and had the audacity to add that, if so, the return route of the proceeds of all sales thus resulting would be over the Alleghany routes, which prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter.

¹ Hulbert, "Washington and the West," 195-6.

CHAPTER III

After Examination Henderson is licensed to practise Law.—

Defeat of the Shawnees by the Virginians who claimed the Land south of the Ohio.—The Attention of Settlers directed to the Land beyond the Alleghanies.—Henderson resolves to form a Transylvania Company and colonize Ken-ta-kee.—Buys from the Cherokees twenty million Acres for ten thousand Pounds Sterling, March, 1775.—Bands of Earlier Kentucky Settlers, fleeing from the Indians, meet Henderson's Colonists.—His Advance, led by Daniel Boone, attacked by Indians.—Henderson appeals in vain to the Fugitives to return with him.—Arrival of the Colonists at the Site of Boonesborough.—Henderson's Anxiety regarding Virginia's Attitude toward his Purchase.—The Governor of Virginia sends a Force which overthrows the Colony.—Actual Settlers on the Purchase permitted to remain in Title.—Grants of Land made to the Company by Virginia and North Carolina in Return for their Outlay.—The Moral Effect of this Proof that the West could be successfully colonized.



CHAPTER III

RICHARD HENDERSON: THE FOUNDER OF TRANSYLVANIA



IN early days in North Carolina, the young man who desired to practise law was compelled to get a certificate from the Chief Justice of the colony and to present this to the Governor; the latter examined the candidate, and, becoming satisfied as to his attainments, granted him a license. Almost a century and a half ago a youth presented himself to the Governor of that colony with the proper credentials

and asked that he be examined for admission to the bar. His name, he affirmed, was Richard Henderson. His father, Samuel Henderson, had moved from Virginia in 1745, Richard's tenth year, and was now Sheriff of Granville County. Richard had assisted his father "in the business of the sherifftry," and, with a few books, had picked up his knowledge of law.

All this the Governor of North Carolina learned with indifference, we can imagine, as he looked the broad-shouldered lad up and down. It may be that North Carolina had now a surplus of pettifoggers; at any rate the Governor was not granting licenses with a free hand to-day. The youth was not voluble, though his firm square jaw denoted both sturdiness and determination; perhaps he was somewhat abashed, as he well may have been, in the presence of the chief executive of the colony.

"How long have you read law?" asked the Governor.

"A twelve-month," answered the lad.

"And what books have you read?" We can

fancy there was the tinge of a sneer in these words. Henderson named his books. If the sneer was hidden until now, it instantly appeared as the young applicant was bluntly told that it was nonsense for him to appear for an examination after such a short period of study of such a limited number of books.

The firm jaws were clinched and the gray eyes snapped as the rebuke was administered. Despite his homely exterior and unpolished address the boy was already enough of a jurist to love justice and fair play; if silent under many circumstances, he could speak when the time demanded speech.

“Sir,” he replied, — and it can be believed there was a ring to the words, — “I am an applicant for examination: it is your duty to examine me; if I am found worthy, I should be granted a license, and if not, I should be refused one, not before.”

We can be sure that the Governor bristled up at hearing his duty outlined to him from the lips of a country boy; and it is no less probable that

as he began an examination it was wholly with the intention of demoralizing utterly the spirit of the youth who had spoken so boldly. The answers did not come so rapidly, probably, as the questions were asked, nor were they formulated with equal nicety ; but the substance was there, of sufficient quantity and sturdy quality, and in short order the Governor, who was a gentleman, found himself admiring the cool, discerning lad who had the confidence of his convictions. The license was granted and with it a bountiful degree of honest praise.

Young Henderson immediately began the practice of law and was increasingly successful ; before the outbreak of the Revolution he was judge on the bench of the Superior Court of North Carolina. As early as 1774 North Carolina was convulsed in the Revolutionary contest, and in that year the Colonial government was abolished there.

The student will search in vain to find the earliest motive which led Judge Henderson to turn his eyes to the westward at this juncture.

Yet since he had come of age he had witnessed important events: the French and Indian War had been fought and won; Pontiac's rebellion had been put down; the famous treaty of Fort Stanwix, which gave Virginia all the territory between the Ohio and Tennessee rivers, had been signed; and now in 1774, when North Carolina was in the throes of revolution, Governor Dunmore of Virginia and General Andrew Lewis defeated the savage Shawnees who had attempted to challenge Virginia's right to the land south of the Ohio. The stories of the first explorers of the hinterland beyond the Alleghanies — Walker, Gist, Washington, and Boone — were now attracting more attention as people began to believe that the Indians could, after all, be made to keep their treaty pledges. As the Revolutionary fires raged in North Carolina, many turned their eyes to the fresh green lands beyond the mountains of which the "Long Hunters" and Boone had told. Were those dreams true? Was there a pleasant land beyond dark Powell's Valley and darker

Cumberland Gap where the British would cease from troubling, and honest men, as well as criminals and debtors, would be at rest? The hope in one man's breast became a conviction, and the conviction a firm purpose. Judge Henderson resolved to form a Transylvania Company, secure a large tract of land, and lead a colony into the sweet meadows of Ken-ta-kee.

It is not known when or how Judge Henderson learned that the Cherokees would sell a portion of their Western hunting grounds. It may have been only a borderland rumor; perhaps it came directly from the wigwams of the Indians at the mouth of a "Long Hunter," possibly a Boone or a Harrod. Somehow it did come, and Henderson resolved immediately to make a stupendous purchase and follow it up with a remarkable emigration. It will be proper to add at once that there is as little probability that the Cherokees had a legal right to sell as that Henderson had to buy; but neither party stood on technicalities. Virginia's sweeping claims, made good by daring politics at the

treaty of Fort Stanwix, covered all the territory between the Ohio and the Tennessee. A Virginian law forbade the private purchase of land from the Indians, though Virginia herself had acquired it by flagrantly evading the plain meaning of the King's proclamation of 1763 in making such a purchase from the Six Nations. And the claim of the Six Nations to possession of the Old Southwest was less substantial than that of the Cherokees who still hunted there.

Passing, then, these technicalities as lightly as Virginia and Henderson did (a common failing in the rough old days when this region was but a moaning forest), let us look quickly to the West. Henderson's plan was admirably laid. He at once took into his service the cool and trusty Daniel Boone. The latter was posted off to that most distant of borderland communities, the Watauga Settlement, to arrange a meeting between the officers of the Transylvania Company and the chiefs of the Cherokees. And here, at the famed Sycamore Shoals on this Watauga tributary of the Tennessee, on

the 17th of March, 1775, Richard Henderson signed the treaty of Fort Watauga. His business associates were Judge John Williams, Leonard Henley Bullock, James Hogg, Nathaniel Thomas, David Hart, John Luttrell, and William Johnstone. But even the well-informed Boone could not make all things move smoothly, and there were delays ere the vast tract of twenty million acres lying south of the Kentucky River was satisfactorily secured. The Cherokee chieftain, Oconostota, opposed the treaty, and the stipulation named, ten thousand pounds sterling in goods; he made, it is said, one of the "most eloquent orations that ever fell from red man's lips," against Boone and Henderson. At the close the quiet promoter, who "could be silent in English and two Indian languages," met the Indian orator apart and alone. No one ever knew what passed between them, but the treaty of Fort Watauga was duly signed. All was ready now for the advance movement, and Henderson immediately employed Daniel Boone to move forward to

mark the path to the Kentucky River, where the settlement was to be made. Felix Walker was one of the band of woodsmen assembled by Boone to assist in this task of marking out for white men the Indian path through Cumberland Gap. "Colonel Boone . . . was to be our pilot," Walker records, "through the wilderness, to the promised land."

Kentucky was a promised land; it was promised by the Cherokees, and none knew better than the savage Shawnees that Cherokee promises were worth no more than their own. In 1773 and 1774 numbers of the half-civilized pioneers had been pressing into Kentucky, and in the latter year cabins had been raised in many quarters. Whether or not there was any sign of genuine permanency in these beginnings, Dunmore's War, which broke out in 1774, put everything at hazard; the Kentucky movement was seemingly destroyed for the time being. For this reason it is that the Henderson purchase at Fort Watauga in March, 1775, was of as precious moment and providential timeliness

as perhaps any other single private enterprise in our early history. As will be seen, the Ohio Company played a most important role in the history of the West in 1787, by making possible the famous Ordinance; but the filling of Kentucky in 1775 was more important at that hour than any other social movement at any other hour in Western history.

For Henderson "meant business"; this was not a get-rich-quick scheme that he was foisting upon others. He came to Watauga in the expectation of proceeding onward to the far-lying land he would buy—a man willing to make great personal as well as financial risk in a venture more chimerical in its day than the incorporation of an airship freight line would be to-day. And by the twentieth of March, Henderson was ready to push westward, along that winding line of wounded trees, up hill and down valley, to the Gap and beyond into the wilderness which lay between the Cumberland Mountains and the meadow lands of Kentucky.

Leaving Fort Watauga March 20, the party, chief of which were Henderson, Hart, and Luttrell, reached Captain Joseph Martin's station in Powell's Valley on the thirtieth. Of the experiences of these men, recounted so interestingly in Henderson's little yellow diary, nothing is so significant as the parties of pioneers which they soon began to meet retreating from Kentucky. The first of these hurrying bands of fugitives was encountered as early as April 7, and between that date and April 19 at least seventy-six fugitives from the "dark and bloody ground" met and passed Henderson's little colony of forty. Lewis's victory of the Summer before had embittered the savages beyond all words; and now, as the Spring of 1775 dawned in the lonely mountain valleys, these first adventurers into Kentucky were hurrying eastward. And this dread of Indian hostility was not a chimera; even as Boone's party was hacking its route to the Kentucky River, it was ambushed in camp by an Indian horde, which assailed it when night was darkest, just before dawn; one

man was killed and two were wounded, one of them fatally.

Now it was that Boone sent Henderson those thrilling words which can be understood only when we realize that the Indian marauders were driving out of Kentucky the entire van which came there and began settling in 1774. "My advice to you, Sir," wrote Boone from that bloody battleground on the trail, "is to come or send as soon as possible. Your company is desired greatly, for the people are very uneasy, but are willing to stay and venture their lives with you, and now is the time to frustrate the intentions of the Indians, and keep the country whilst we are in it. If we give way to them now, it will ever be the case."

There is, unfortunately, no portrait of Richard Henderson in existence; if one picture by some magic art could be secured, those who are proudest of his memory could surely prefer no scene to this: a man a little above average height, broad of shoulders but not fleshy, clad in the rough garb of the typical pioneer, standing

in Boone's trail on a ragged spur of the gray-grained Cumberlands, pleading with a pale-faced, disheartened Kentucky pioneer, to turn about, join his company, and return to the Kentucky River. For this was the mission of his life — to give heart to that precious movement into Kentucky at this critical first hour of her history. A beginning had been made, but it was on the point of being swept from its feet. The Transylvania Company, led with courage and confidence by Boone and Henderson, ignored the fears of fugitives and triumphed splendidly in the face of every known and many unknown fears.

At noon of Saturday, April 8, Henderson and his followers were toiling up the ascent into Cumberland Gap. On this day a returning party as large as Henderson's was encountered. "Met about 40 persons returning from the Cantuckey," wrote Henderson in his diary. "On Acct. of the Late Murder by the Indians, could prevail one [on] one only to return. Memo. Several Virginians who were with us returned." On the

twelfth another company of fugitives was met on Richmond Creek; William Calk, one of Henderson's party, jotted this down in his journal: "There we met another Company going back [to Virginia]; they tell such News Abram and Drake is afraid to go aney further." This "Abram" was Abraham Hanks, uncle of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. But pushing bravely on, Henderson and his daring associates reached the site of the new Boonesborough (Fort Boone, Henderson called it) on the twentieth of April.

From this it is well to date the founding of a genuine settlement in Kentucky, one day after the rattle of that running fire of muskets at Lexington and Concord which rang around the world. In an indefinite sense, there were settlements in Kentucky before this; but no promoter-friend of Kentucky ever coaxed back over the Cumberland Mountains any of the founders of Boonesborough! True, Boonesborough itself did not exist permanently; but not because the land was deserted. Boonesborough

was not on the direct line from Cumberland Gap to the "Falls of the Ohio" (Louisville), and did not play the part in later Kentucky history that Harrodsburg and Crab Orchard did. It was, however, the first important fortified Kentucky station, and its builders, chief of whom was Richard Henderson, received their heroic inspiration from no persons or parties in existence in Kentucky when they came thither. Henderson's determination to hold the ground gained is seen in the following letter written in July, 1775, to Captain Martin, in Powell's Valley, who had just given the Indians a bloody check: ". . . Your spirited conduct gives me great pleasure. Keep your men in heart if possible; now is your time, the Indians must not drive us." A touch of the loneliness of Judge Henderson's situation is sensed in another letter to Martin: "I long much to hear from you," he writes from the banks of the far-away Kentucky, "pray write me at large, how the matter goes with you in the valey, as well as what passes in Virginia."

Little wonder he was anxious concerning Virginia's attitude toward his purchase and the bold advance of his party of colonizers, from which several Virginians had deserted. There could be no doubt of Virginia's opinion of these North Carolinians who had taught that colony what could be done in the West by brave, determined men. Henderson's purchase was annulled, and Henderson and his compatriots were described as vagabond interlopers, in a governor's anathema. Before this was known, Henderson issued a regular call for a meeting of the colonists to take the initial steps of forming a State government. But all that Henderson planned is not to our purpose here. A rush of Virginians through the doorway in Cumberland Gap, which Boone and Henderson had opened, swept the inchoate state of Transylvania from record and almost from memory. The Transylvania Company never survived the Virginia governor's proclamation, North Carolina joining Virginia in repudiating the private purchase. Actual settlers on Henderson's purchase, however, were

permitted to remain in title ; and, in return for the money expended by Henderson and his associates, Virginia granted his company two hundred thousand acres of land in the vicinity of Henderson, Kentucky ; and North Carolina granted an equal amount in Carter's Valley near the Cumberland Mountains. In each case the actual acreage was about double that mentioned in the grant.

But this appropriation of nearly a million acres to the Henderson Company cannot be viewed at this day as other than a payment for great value received. From any standpoint Richard Henderson's brave advance into Kentucky, in April, 1775, must be considered one of the most heroic displays of that typical American spirit of comprehensive aggrandizement of which so much is heard to-day. Its great value may be guessed from the moral effect of the founding of Fort Boone at the critical hour when the Revolutionary flames, so long burning in secret, burst forth to enlighten the world. It meant much to the East that Henderson and Boone should prove

that a settlement on the lower Ohio Basin could be made and maintained; it meant everything to the infant West that Kentucky should so soon begin to fill with men, women, and children. The debt of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to Kentucky can never be paid and probably never will be appropriately recognized. The lands north of the Ohio were freed from savage dominion largely by the raiding Kentuckians. It is certain that the most spectacular campaign in Western history, Clark's conquest of Illinois, would never have taken place in 1778 if Henderson and Boone had not placed the possibility of successful Kentucky immigration beyond a reasonable doubt in 1775.

Judge Henderson returned to North Carolina upon the failure of the Transylvania Company, no doubt depressed and disappointed. The later allotment of land to the Transylvania Company by Virginia and North Carolina in part annulled the severe early defamatory charges of the Virginia governor. He lived to a peaceful old age, and lies buried near his old colonial mansion near Williamstown, North Carolina.

Boonesborough is well remembered as Boone's Fort ; but it is unjust to forget that Boone was acting in the employ of Richard Henderson, the founder of Transylvania.

CHAPTER IV

A Movement among the Colonies to seize the Unoccupied Land Northwest of the Ohio.— Putnam's Hardy Training in Boyhood. — His Training in the Old French War. — His Achievements in the Revolutionary War. — He and Many Soldiers petition Congress for Western Land, as promised at the Beginning of the War. — The Ohio Company of Associates, by its Agent, Mr. Cutler, persuades Congress to pass the Ordinance of 1787.— March of the Founders of Ohio from Ipswich, Mass., to the Site of West Newton, Pa. — Putnam prepares to descend the Youghiogheny, Monongahela, and Ohio to Fort Harmar. — Fears of the Travellers that the Indians driven from Kentucky would attack them.— The Party found Marietta at the Mouth of the Muskingum. — Inauguration of the Governor of the Territory. — Contrast between Conditions, North of the Ohio and South of it. — Other Settlements on the Ohio in the Eighteenth Century. — Putnam's Beautiful Character. — Washington's Opinion of him.

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CHAPTER IV

RUFUS PUTNAM: THE FATHER OF OHIO



VER the beginning of great movements, whether social or political, there often hangs a cloud of obscurity. No event of equal importance in our history is more clear than the founding and first set-

tlement of the territory northwest of the Ohio River, from which the five imperial commonwealths of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin sprang. It occurred at that crucial

moment when Washington was calling upon Virginia, and all the colonies, to seize the West and the hope it offered, when the West was another name for opportunity to the spent colonies at the close of the Revolutionary struggle.

The hero of the movement, General Rufus Putnam, was one of those plain, sturdy, noble men whom it is a delight to honor. He was born at Sutton, Massachusetts, April 9, 1738, and was thus six years younger than Washington, who always honored him. With little education, save that gained from a few books bought with pennies earned by blacking boots and running errands for guests at his illiterate stepfather's inn, he became a self-made man of the best type, — the man who seizes every advantage from book and friend to reach a high plane and scan a wider horizon. The Old French War was the training school for the Revolutionary conflict; and here, with Gates and Mercer and Washington and St. Clair and Wayne and Gladwin and Gibson, Rufus Putnam learned to love his country as only those can who have



RUFUS PUTNAM

Leader of the Founders of Marietta, Ohio



been willing to risk and wreck their all in her behalf.

Then came the Revolution. In the first act of the glorious yet pitiful drama Rufus Putnam stands out conspicuously; for "we take no leaf from the pure chaplet of Washington's fame," affirmed Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, "when we say that the success of the first great military operation of the Revolution was due to Rufus Putnam." The story is of intrinsic interest. On a winter's evening in 1776, Rufus Putnam was invited to dine at the headquarters of the Commander-in-chief in the camp before Boston. After the dinner party had broken up, Washington detained him with questions concerning the proper policy to be pursued with reference to the future plan of campaign. As is well known, Washington favored an entrenchment on Dorchester Heights which would bring on a second Bunker Hill with a fair chance of victory, rather than the alternative of marching upon the city across the ice-bound waters. But the frozen state of the ground was a serious handicap in

any entrenchment plan at that moment. Putnam was asked in short how the equivalent of entrenchments could be erected; the solving of the question meant the deliverance of Massachusetts from the burden of British occupation. This son of the State was equal to the moment, and his own simple account of the means adopted is exceptionally interesting :

“I left headquarters in company with another gentleman, and on our way came by General Heath’s. I had no thoughts of calling until I came against his door, and then I said, ‘Let us call on General Heath,’ to which he agreed. I had no other motive but to pay my respects to the general. While there, I cast my eye on a book which lay on the table, lettered on the back ‘Müller’s Field Engineer.’ I immediately requested the general to lend it to me. He denied me. I repeated my request. He again refused, and told me he never lent his books. I then told him that he must recollect that he was one who, at Roxbury, in a measure compelled me to undertake a business which, at the time, I confessed I never had read a word about, and that he must let me have the book. After some more excuses on his part and close pressing on mine I obtained the loan of it.”

“In looking at the table of contents,” writes Senator Hoar, “his eye was caught by the word ‘chandelier,’ a new word to him. He read carefully the description and soon had his plan ready. The chandeliers were made of stout timbers, ten feet long, into which were framed posts, five feet high and five feet apart, placed on the ground in parallel lines and the open spaces filled in with bundles of fascines, strongly picketed together, thus forming a movable parapet of wood instead of earth, as heretofore done. The men were immediately set to work in the adjacent apple orchard and woodlands, cutting and bundling up the fascines and carrying them with the chandeliers on to the ground selected for the work. They were put in their place in a single night.

“When the sun went down on Boston on the 4th of March, Washington was at Cambridge, and Dorchester Heights were as nature or the husbandman had left them in the autumn. When Sir William Howe rubbed his eyes on the morning of the 5th, he saw through the heavy mists, the entrenchments, on which, he said, the rebels had done more work in a night than his whole army would have done in a month. He wrote to Lord Dartmouth that it must have been the employment of at least twelve thousand men. His own effective force, including seamen, was but about eleven thousand. Washington had but fourteen thousand fit for duty. ‘Some of our officers,’ said the ‘Annual Register,’ — I suppose Edmund

Burke was the writer, — ‘acknowledged that the expedition with which these works were thrown up, with their sudden and unexpected appearance, recalled to their minds the wonderful stories of enchantment and invisible agency which are so frequent in the Eastern Romances.’ Howe was a man of spirit. He took the prompt resolution to attempt to dislodge the Americans the next night before their works were made impregnable. Earl Percy, who had learned something of Yankee quality at Bunker Hill and Lexington, was to command the assault. But the Power that dispersed the Armada, baffled all the plans of the British general. There came ‘a dreadful storm at night,’ which made it impossible to cross the bay until the American works were perfected. The Americans, under Israel Putnam, marched into Boston, drums beating and colors flying. The veteran British army, aided by a strong naval force, soldier and sailor, Englishman and Tory, sick and well, bag and baggage, got out of Boston before the strategy of Washington, the engineering of Putnam, and the courage of the despised and untried yeomen, from whose leaders they withheld the usual titles of military respect. ‘It resembled,’ said Burke, ‘more the emigration of a nation than the breaking up of a camp.’”

His later solid achievements during the war made him, in Washington’s estimation, the best

engineer in the army, whether French or American, and "to be a great engineer with only such advantages of education as Rufus Putnam enjoyed, is to be a man of consummate genius." A sober, brave man of genius was required to lead to a successful issue the great work to which Rufus Putnam was now providentially called.

The vast territory between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi came into the possession of the United States at the close of the Revolution. Then it was made possible for Congress to grant the bounty-lands promised to soldiers at the beginning of the war, and likewise to redeem its worthless script in Western lands. This a grateful government was willing to do, but the question was vast and difficult. If occupied, the territory must be governed. Few more serious problems faced the young Republic.

The question was practically solved by two men, Rufus Putnam and that noble clergyman, Manasseh Cutler, pastor of the Congregational church at Ipswich, Massachusetts. Through

Putnam, a large body of officers and men had petitioned Congress urgently for Western land: "Ten years ago you promised bounties in lands," was Putnam's appeal now to Congress through General Washington; "we have faithfully performed our duty, as history will record. We come to you now and ask that, in redemption of your promise, you give us homes in that Western wilderness. We will hew down the forests, and therein erect temples to the living God, raise and educate our children to serve and love and honor the nation for which their fathers fought, cultivate farms, build towns and cities, and make that wilderness the pride and glory of the nation." The Ohio Company of Associates was organized at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern, in Boston, March 1, 1786, by the election of Rufus Putnam, chairman, and Winthrop Sargent, secretary. As the agent of this organization, Dr. Cutler hastened to New York, while the famous Ordinance of 1787 was pending. This instrument had been before Congress for three years, but was passed within twelve days after

this hero-preacher and skilled diplomat came to New York. The Ordinance organized, from lands ceded to the general government by the several States, the magnificent tract known as the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio. The delay had been caused by the hazard of erecting a great Territory, to be protected at heavy expense, without having it occupied by a considerable number of worthy citizens. The Ohio Company of Associates had offered to take a million and a half acres. This was unsatisfactory to the delegates in Congress. It was a mere clearing in all that vast tract stretching from the Alleghany to the Wisconsin. Dr. Cutler hastened to New York to reconcile the parties interested.

The situation was prophetically unique. The Northwest Territory could not be organized safely without the very band of colonizers which Cutler represented and of which Putnam was the leader. On the other hand, the Ohio Company could not secure Western land without being assured that it was to be an integral part

of the country for which they had fought. Putnam's appeal read: "All we ask is that it shall be consecrated to us and our children forever, with the blessing of that Declaration which, proclaimed to the world and sustained by our arms, established as self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that to secure these ends, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed." Thus the famed Ordinance and the Ohio Company's purchase went hand in hand; each was impossible without the other. In order to realize the hope of his clients on the one hand, and satisfy the demands of the delegates in Congress on the other, Dr. Cutler added to the grant of the Ohio Company an additional one of three and a half million acres for a Scioto Company. Thus, by a stupendous speculation (so unhappy in its result, though compromising in no way the Ohio Company or its agents),

John Adolphus



REV. MANASSEH CUTLER

Ohio Pioneer



and by shrewdly, though without dissimulation, making known his determination to buy land privately from one of the individual States if Congress would not now come to terms, Dr. Cutler won a signal victory. The Ordinance of 1787 was passed, corrected to the very letter of his own amendments, and the United States entered into the largest private contract it had ever made.

With the passing of the Ordinance and the signing of the indented agreement for the Ohio Company by Cutler and Sargent on the 27th of October of that most memorable year in our documentary annals, a new era of Western history dawned. Up to that moment, there had been only illegal settlements between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes — excepting the grants of land made to David Zeisberger's Moravians on the Tuscarawas. On numerous occasions troops had been sent from Pittsburg (Fort Pitt) to drive away from the northern side of the Ohio settlers who had squatted on the Seven Ranges, which Congress had caused

to be surveyed westward from the Pennsylvania line. It being difficult to reach these squatters from Pittsburg, Fort Harmar was erected at the mouth of the Muskingum, in 1785, where troops were kept to drive off intruders, protect the surveyors, and keep the Indians in awe. The Ohio Company's purchase extended from the seventh through the seventeenth range, running northward far enough to include the necessary amount of territory. It was natural, then, that the capital of the new colony should be located at the mouth of the Muskingum, under the guns of the fort.

The New Englanders who formed the Ohio Company were not less determined in their venture than were the North Carolinians who formed the Transylvania Company thirteen years before; and, though the founders of Marietta, Ohio, ran no such risk (it has been said) as did the founders of Boonesborough, Kentucky, we of to-day can have no just appreciation of the toil and the wearing years which these founders of the Old Northwest now faced. Yet danger

and fear were no novelty to them. How fitting it was that these men, who first entered the portals of the Northwest, bearing in their hands the precious Ordinance and guided by the very star of empire, should have been in part the heroes of the two wars which saved this land from its enemies. One cannot look unmoved upon that body of travellers who met at daybreak, December 6, 1787, before Dr. Cutler's home at Ipswich, to receive his blessing before starting. Theirs was no idle ambition. No Moravian, no Jesuit with beads and rosary, ever faced the Western wilderness with a fairer purpose. In Kentucky, the Virginians had gained, and were holding with powerful grasp, the fair lands of *Ken-ta-kee*; elsewhere the Black Forest loomed dark and foreboding. Could the New Englanders do equally well?

Their earnestness was a prophecy of their great success. In December the first party of carpenters and boat-builders, under Major Hatfield White, started on the westward journey, and in January 1788 the remainder of the brave

vanguard, under Colonel Ebenezer Sproat and General Rufus Putnam, followed. These were the forty-eight "Founders of Ohio." The rigors of a northern winter made the long journey over Forbes's, or the Pennsylvania Road, a most exhaustive experience. This road through Lancaster, Carlisle, Shippensburg, and Bedford was from this time forward a connecting link between New England and Ohio. It was a rough gorge of a road ploughed deep by the heavy wheels of many an army wagon. Near Bedford, Pennsylvania, the road forked; the northern fork ran on to Pittsburg; the southern, struck off southwestwardly to the Youghioghny River and the lower Ohio. This branch the New England caravan followed to Sumrill's Ferry on the Youghioghny, the present West Newton, Pennsylvania. Here Putnam planned to build a rude flotilla and descend the Youghioghny, Monongahela, and Ohio to Fort Harmar. The severe winter prevented immediate building of this fleet, but by April all was in readiness. The main boat was a covered galley, forty-five

feet long, which was most appropriately named the "Adventure Galley." The heavy baggage was carried on a flat boat and a large canoe.

Of the men who formed Putnam's company what more can be said — or what less — than what Senator Hoar has left in his eloquent centennial oration at Marietta in 1888? ✓

"The stately figures of illustrious warriors and statesmen, the forms of sweet and comely matrons, living and real as if you had seen them yesterday, rise before you now. Varnum, than whom a courtlier figure never entered the presence of a queen, — soldier, statesman, scholar, orator, — whom Thomas Paine, no mean judge, who had heard the greatest English orators in the greatest days of English eloquence, declared the most eloquent man he had ever heard speak; Whipple, gallant seaman as ever trod a deck, — a man whom Farragut or Nelson would have loved as a brother, first of the glorious procession of American naval heroes, first to fire an American gun at the flag of England on the sea, first to unfurl the flag of his own country on the Thames, first pioneer of the river commerce of the Ohio to the Gulf; Meigs, hero of Sagg Harbor, of the march to Quebec, of the storming of Stony Point, the Christian gentleman and soldier, whom the Cherokees named the White Path, in token

of the unfailing kindness and inflexible faith which had conveyed to their darkened minds some not inadequate conception of the spirit of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Parsons, soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War; the chivalric and ingenious Devol, said by his biographer to be 'the most perfect figure of a man to be seen amongst a thousand'; the noble presence of a Sproat; the sons of Israel Putnam and Manasseh Cutler; Fearing, and Greene, and Goodale, and the Gilmans; Tupper, leader in Church and State, the veteran of a hundred exploits, who seems, in the qualities of intellect and heart, like a twin brother of Rufus Putnam; the brave and patriotic, but unfortunate St. Clair, first Governor of the Northwest, President of the Continental Congress;—the mighty shades of these heroes and their companions pass before our eyes, beneath the primeval forest, as the shades of the Homeric heroes before Ulysses in the Land of Asphodel."

It did not argue that the New Englanders on the Ohio could hold their ground simply because the Kentucky movement had been for over a decade such a marvellous success. Its very

success was the chief menace of the Kentucky problem. The eyes of five thousand Indians were fastened there, for from Kentucky had come army after army, driving the savages northward out of the valleys of the Muskingum, Scioto, and Miami Rivers, until now they hovered about the western extremity of Lake Erie. By a treaty signed at Fort McIntosh in 1786, the Indians had sold to the United States practically all of eastern and southern Ohio. And so the settlement at the mouth of the Muskingum at this critical moment was in every sense a test settlement. There was a chance that the savages would forget the Kentuckians who had driven them back to the Lakes and made possible the Ohio Company settlement and turn upon the New Englanders themselves who now landed at the mouth of the Muskingum on the 7th of April, 1788, and began their home-building on the opposite bank of the Muskingum from Fort Harmar.

Here sprang up the rude pioneer settlement which was to be, for more than a year, the capital

of the great new Territory — forever the historic portal of the Old Northwest. These Revolutionary soldiers under Putnam combined the two names Marie Antoinette, and named their capital Marietta in memory of the faithfulness of Frenchmen and France to the patriot cause. Here arose the stately forest-castle, the Campus Martius, and near it was built the office of the Ohio Company, where General Putnam carried on, in behalf of the Ohio Company, the important business of the settlement. In July, 1788, Governor St. Clair arrived, and with imposing ceremony the great Territory was formally established and its governor inaugurated.

Putnam's brave dream had come true. The best blood and brain of New England were now on the Ohio to shape forever the Old Northwest and the great States to be made from it. The soldiers were receiving the promised bounties, and an almost worthless half-a-million dollars had been redeemed in lands worth many millions. The scheme of colonization, which was but a moment before a thing of words and

paper, became a living, moving influence of immense power. Another New England on the Ohio arose full-armed from the specifications of the great Ordinance and the daring confidence of Rufus Putnam and his colony. South of the Ohio, the miserable Virginia system of land-ownership by tomahawk-claim was in force from the Monongahela to the Tennessee; north of the Ohio, the New England township system prevailed. South of the Ohio, slavery was permitted and encouraged; to the northward, throughout the wide empire included within the Ordinance, slavery was forever excluded. Two more fundamental differences could not have existed. And to these might be added the encouragement given by the Ordinance to religion and education. The coming of the Ohio Company to Marietta meant many things to many men, but the one great fundamental fact is of most importance. The founding of Marietta by Rufus Putnam in reality made possible the Ordinance of 1787 — of which Daniel Webster said, “I doubt whether one single law of

any lawgiver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of more distinct, marked, and lasting character.”

The heroic movement which has justly given Rufus Putnam the title “Father of Ohio” has been one of the marvellous successes of the first century of our national expansion. Three other settlements were made on the Ohio in 1788 near Cincinnati by sons of New Jersey. Within ten years, Connecticut sent a brave squad of men through the wilderness of New York to found Cleveland; Virginia sent of her brain and blood to found one of the most important settlements in Ohio in the fair Scioto valley. These four settlements, before 1800, in the Black Forest of Ohio were typically cosmopolitan and had a significant mission in forming, so far west as Lake Erie and so far south as the lower Ohio, the cosmopolitan American State par excellence.

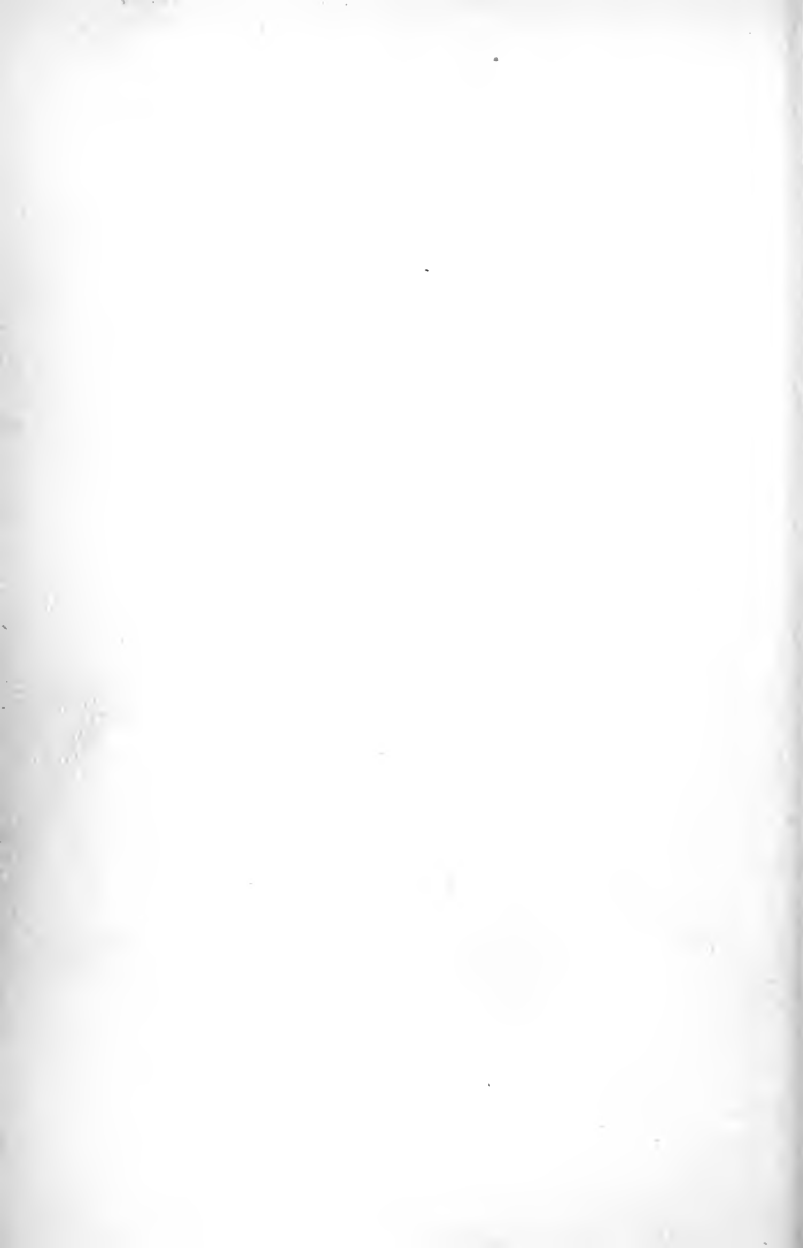
But of all these early prompters — Symmes, Cleaveland, Massie, and Putnam — the last is the most lovable, and the movement he led is the most significant and interesting. Our subject is

so large in all its leading features, that the personality of Putnam can only be touched upon. As manager for the Ohio Company, a thousand affairs of both great and trifling moment were a part of his tiresome routine. Yet the heart of the colony's leader was warm to the lowliest servant. Many a poor tired voyager descending the Ohio had cause to know that the founder of Marietta was as good as a whole nation knew he was brave. In matters concerning the founding of the "Old Two-Horn," the first church in the Old Northwest, — and in the organizing of the little academy in the block-house of the fort, to which Marietta College proudly traces her founding, the private formative influence of Putnam is seen to clear advantage. Noble in a great crisis, he was noble still in the lesser wearing duties of that pioneer colony of which he was the hope and mainstay. Now called upon by Washington to make the long journey, in the dark days of 1792 after St. Clair's terrible defeat, to represent the United States in a treaty with the Illinois Indians on

the Wabash; again, with sweet earnestness settling a difficulty arising between a tippling clergyman and his church; now, with absolute fairness and generosity, criticising his brave but high-strung governor for actions which he regarded as too arbitrary, the character of Rufus Putnam appeals more and more as a remarkable example of that splendid simplicity which is the proof and crown of greatness.

A yellow manuscript in Washington's handwriting is preserved in the New York State Library, which contains his private opinion of the Revolutionary officers. It is such a paper as Washington would not have left for the public to read, as it expresses an inside view. Relatives of a number of these Revolutionary heroes would not read its simple sentences with pleasure, but the descendants of Rufus Putnam may remember it with pride: Putnam had not been accused of securing certificates from his soldiers by improper means; he was not, like Wayne, "open to flattery — vain"; the odor of a whiskey flask was not suggested by his name; on

the contrary, "he possesses a strong mind and is a discreet man." Considering the nature and purpose of this high encomium, it is not less than a hearty "Well done" to a good and faithful servant.



CHAPTER V

The Grave of David Zeisberger, Moravian Missionary to the Indians. — The Great Length of his Service. — His Flight from Moravia to Saxony. — Arrival at Bethlehem, Pa. — He studies the Mohawk Language. — Visits the Land of the Iroquois and is captured as a French Spy. — Imprisoned by Governor Clinton and freed by Parliament. — The Iroquois place in his Mission-house the Archives of their Nation. — He converts Many Delawares in Western Pennsylvania. — His Work interrupted by Pontiac's Rebellion. — The Delawares invite him to the Black Forest of Ohio. — He takes with him Two Whole Villages of Christian Indians. — Their Unfortunate Location between Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit in the Revolutionary War. — They are removed by the British to Sandusky. — One Hundred of them, being permitted to return, are murdered by the Americans. — The Remnant, after Many Hardships, rest for Six Years in Canada, and return to Ohio. — Zeisberger's Death.

CHAPTER V

DAVID ZEISBERGER: HERO OF "THE MEADOW OF LIGHT" OF LIGHT"



IN the centre of the old Black Forest of America, near New Philadelphia, Ohio, a half-forgotten Indian graveyard lies beside the dusty country road. You may count here several score of graves

by the slight mounds of earth that were raised above them a century or so ago.

At one extremity of this plot of ground an iron railing incloses another grave, marked by a

plain, marble slab, where rest the mortal remains of a hero, the latchets of whose shoes few men of his race have been worthy to unloose. And those of us who hold duty a sacred trust, and likeness unto the Nazarene the first and chiefest duty, will do well to make the acquaintance of this daring and faithful hero, whose very memory throws over the darkest period of our history the light that never was on sea or land.

The grave is that of David Zeisberger, the Moravian missionary to the Indians in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Canada for fifty active years, who was buried at this spot at his dying request, that he might await the Resurrection among his faithful Indians. His record is perhaps unequalled in point of length of service, by the record of any missionary of any church or sect in any land at any time. Among stories of promotion and daring in early America, this one is most unique and most uplifting.

On a July night in 1726 a man and his wife fled from their home in Austrian Moravia toward

the mountains on the border of Saxony for conscience' sake. They took with them nothing save their five-year-old boy, who ran stumbling between them, holding to their hands. The family of three remained in Saxony ten years. Then the parents emigrated to America, leaving the son of fifteen years in Saxony to continue his education. But within a year he took passage for America and joined his parents in Georgia, just previous to their removal to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The lad soon became interested in the study of the Delaware Indian language among the natives of that tribe living along the Susquehanna, and at once showed great proficiency. Appreciating his talent, the fathers of the Moravian Church determined to send the young man to Europe, that in the best universities he might secure the finest training. He went as far as New York. There, just as his ship was to sail, he pleaded with tears and on his knees to be allowed to return to the woods of Pennsylvania and the school of the red men there.

The words of the wise were overcome by those of the youth, and an earnest soul, as brave as it was earnest, was saved to a life of unparalleled sacrifice and devotion.

On returning to Bethlehem Zeisberger joined a class that was studying the Mohawk tongue, the language of that most powerful tribe of the Iroquois nation which practically controlled, by tomahawk and threat, all the territory between the colonies and the Mississippi. Soon the looked-for opportunity of visiting the Iroquois land came, and the young student was told off to accompany the heroic Frederick Christian Post. This was in the dark year 1744, only a few months previous to the outbreak of the Old French War. The lad was now in his twenty-third year.

In February of the next year, after these two men entered the shadow of New York, the report was circulated in New York City that two spies had been captured among the Iroquois, who were guilty of attempting to win that nation over to the French. Such a charge at this

time was the most serious imaginable, for the contest for the friendship of the Iroquois between the French on the St. Lawrence and the English on the Atlantic was now of great importance. Upon that friendship, and the support it guaranteed, seemed to hang the destiny of the continent. The report created endless consternation, and the spies were hurried on to Governor Clinton, who demanded that the younger be brought before him instantly.

“Why do you go among the Indians?” asked Clinton, savagely. It was David Zeisberger to whom he spoke, a youth not daunted by arrogance and bluster.

“To learn their language,” he replied, calmly.

“And what use will you make of their language?”

“We hope,” replied the lad, “to get the liberty to preach among the Indians the Gospel of our crucified Saviour, and to declare to them what we have personally experienced of His grace in our hearts.”

The Governor was taken aback. This was a

strange answer to have come from a spy's lips. Yet he drove on rough-shod, taking it for granted that the lad was lying, and that there was an ulterior motive for the dangerous journey at such a time. Remembering the fort the English had built near the present site of Rome, New York, and by which they hoped to command the Mohawk Valley and the portage path to Wood Creek and Lake Oneida, he continued :

“You observed how many cannon were in Fort William, and how many soldiers and Indians in the castle ?”

“I was not so much as in the fort, nor did I count the soldiers or Indians.”

Balked and angry, as well as nonplussed, Governor Clinton insisted :

“Our laws require that all travellers in this government of New York shall swear allegiance to the King of England and have a license from the Governor.”

Governor Clinton's name would certainly not adorn a license for these men. Whether or not

the youth saw the trap, he was as frank as his interrogator :

“ I never before heard of such a law in any country or kingdom in the world,” replied Zeisberger.

“ Will you not take the oath ?” roared Governor Clinton, amazed.

“ I will not,” said the prisoner, and he was straightway cast into a prison, where he and his companion lay for six weeks, until freed by an ordinance passed by Parliament exempting the missionaries of the Moravian Church from taking oath to the British crown.

Back into the Iroquois land journeyed the liberated prisoner, and for ten doubtful years, until 1755, Zeisberger was engaged in learning the languages of the various tribes of the Six Nations, and in active missionary service. His success was very great. Perhaps in all the history of these famous Indians there was no other man, with the exception of Sir William Johnson, whom they trusted as much as they trusted David Zeisberger. Cheated on the one hand

by the Dutch of New York, and robbed on the other by agents of the French and the English, the Iroquois became suspicious of all men; and it is vastly more than a friendly compliment to record that in his mission-house at Onondaga they placed the entire archives of their nation, comprising the most valuable collection of treaties and letters from colonial governors ever made by an Indian nation on this continent. But war now drove the missionary away, as throughout his life war was ever to dash his fondest dreams and ever to drive him back.

At the close of the Old French War, the missionaries of the Moravian Church were out again upon the Indian trails that led to the North and West. The first to start was Zeisberger, now in the prime of life, forty-two years old. But he did not turn northward. A call that he could not ignore had come to him from the friends of his boyhood days, the Delawares, who lived now in Western Pennsylvania. With a single companion he pushed outward to them. Taking up his residence in what is now Bradford

County, Pennsylvania, he soon began to repeat the successes he had achieved in the Iroquois land, many being converted, and the whole nation learning to love and trust the earnest preacher. Then came Pontiac's terrible rebellion. Compelled to hurry back to the settlements again, Zeisberger awaited the end of that bloody storm, which swept away every fort in the West save only Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit.

At last the way was again open, and Zeisberger soon faced the wilderness. The Church fathers now came to the conclusion that it was best to extend missionary labor farther than ever before. The entire West had been saved to England, and the future was bright. It was Zeisberger to whom they looked, and not for a moment did the veteran flinch.

"Whither is the white man going?" asked an old Seneca chieftain of Zeisberger.

"To the Alleghany River," was the reply.

"Why does the paleface travel such unknown roads? This is no road for white

people, and no white man has come this trail before."

"Seneca," said the pale man, "the business I am on is different from that of other white men, and the roads I travel are different too. I am come to bring the Indian great and good words."

The work now begun in Potter County, and later extended to Lawrence County, on the Beaver River, in the province of Pennsylvania, was not less successful than Zeisberger's work in New York. "You are right," said the bravest Indian of the nation to his Indian chieftain; "I have joined the Moravians. Where they go I will go; where they lodge I will lodge; their God shall be my God." His faith was soon tested, as was that of all Zeisberger's converts.

For there was yet a farther West. Beyond the Beaver, the Delaware nation had spread throughout the Black Forest that covered what is now Ohio to the dots of prairie land on the edge of what is Indiana. Somewhere here the prairie fires had ceased their devastation. Between the Wabash and the crest of the

Alleghanies lay the heaviest forest of the old New World. Of its eastern half the Delawares were now masters, with their capital at Goschogochunk on the Muskingum, the present Coshocton, Ohio. The fame of Zeisberger had come even here, and the grand council of the Delawares sent him a call to bring his great and good words into the Black Forest. It was an irresistible appeal. Yet the Moravian Church could not allow Zeisberger to leave the congregations in Pennsylvania, for no one could take his place. The brave man gave his answer quickly: "I will take them with me."

He kept his word, and in the Spring of 1772 the heroic man could have been seen floating down the Beaver and Ohio rivers with two whole villages of Christian Indians, seeking a new home in the Black Forest on the Upper Muskingum. Here they founded three settlements in all, Schönbrunn (Beautiful Spring), Lichtenau (Meadow of Light), Gnadenhütten (Tents of Grace), where the fabled wanderer is made by the poet to extend his search for

Evangeline. Here the Moravian missionaries, Zeisberger and his noble assistant, Heckewelder, spent five marvellously successful years, in what is known as the first settlements of whites in the present State of Ohio, excepting such French as had lived in the Lake region. The settlements were governed by a complete set of published laws, and in many respects the experiment was an ideality fully achieved. The good influence of the orderly and devout colony spread throughout the Central West at a time when every influence was bad and growing rapidly worse. For five or six years Zeisberger here saw the richest fruit of his life; here also he was doomed to see what was undoubtedly the most disgraceful and dastardly crime ever committed in the name of freedom on this continent.

The Revolutionary War now broke out, as if to despoil wantonly this aged hero's last and happiest triumph. The Moravians determined upon the impossible role of neutrality, with their settlements just beside the hard, wide



JOHN HECKEWELDER

• *Missionary to the Indians*



war-path which ran between Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit; these were the strongholds, respectively, of the Americans and the British, who were quarrelling bitterly for the allegiance of the savages in the Black Forest between them. The policy was wholly disastrous. For some time the Christian Indians, because the influence of the past few years had been so uplifting, escaped unharmed. But as the conflict grew, bitter suspicion arose among both the Americans in Western Pennsylvania and the British at Sandusky and Detroit.

The British first took action. In 1781 three hundred Indians under a British officer appeared and ordered the inhabitants of the three villages to leave the valley they loved and go to Sandusky, where a stricter watch might be kept over them. Like sheep they were driven northward, the aged Zeisberger toiling at the head of the broken-hearted company. As Winter came down from the north, there being very little food, a company of one hundred Christian Indians obtained permission to return to their

former homes to harvest corn which had been left standing in the fields. It was an unfortunate moment for the return, and the borderers on the ravaged Pennsylvania frontier looked upon the movement with suspicion. It is said that a party of British Indians, returning from a Pennsylvania raid, left here a sign of their bloody triumph. Be that as it may, a posse of Americans suddenly appeared on the scene. The entire company of Moravian sufferers was surrounded and taken captive. The question was raised, "Shall we take our prisoners to Pittsburg, or kill them?" The answer of the majority was, "Kill." The men were hurried into one building and the women into another, and the murderers went to work.

"My arm fails me," said one desperado, as he knocked his fourteenth bound victim on the head. "I think I have done pretty well. Go on in the same way." And that night, as the moon arose above the Tuscarawas, the wolves and panthers fought in the moonlight for the bodies of ninety Christian Indians most foully murdered.

Had each been his own child, the great grief

of the aged Zeisberger could not have been more heartrending. After the storm had swept over him and a shadow of the old peace came back to his stricken heart, Zeisberger called his children about him and offered a most patient prayer.

The record of Zeisberger's resolute faithfulness to the remnant of his church from this time onward is almost incredible. Like a Moses he led them always, and first to a temporary home in Macomb County, Michigan. From there they were in four years driven by the Chippewas. The forlorn pilgrims now set sail in two sloops on Lake Erie; they took refuge from a terrible storm in the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. For a time they rested at a temporary home in Independence Township, Cuyahoga County. Famine drove them in turn from here. Setting out on foot, Zeisberger led them next along the shore of Lake Erie westward to the present site of Milan, Erie County, Ohio. Here they resided until the outbreak of the savage Indian War of 1791. To escape from this, Zeisberger secured from the British government a tract of

land twelve miles long and six miles wide for the Moravian Indians along the Grand River in Canada. Here the pilgrims remained six years. But with the close of the Indian War, it was possible for them to return to their beloved home in the Tuscarawas Valley. The United States had given to the Moravian Church two tracts of land here, embracing the sites of the three towns formerly built, containing in all twelve thousand acres.

Back to the old home the patriarch Zeisberger brought his little company in the year 1798. His first duty in the gloomy Gnadenhütten was not forgotten. With a bowed head and heavy heart the old man and one assistant gathered from beneath the dense mass of bush and vine, whither the wild beasts had carried them, the bones of the ninety and more sacrificed Christians, and over their present resting-place one of the proudest of monuments now rises. For full ten years more this hero labored in the shadow of the forests where his happiest days had been spent, and only as the Winter of 1808 came

down upon the valley from the lakes did his great heart cease beating and his spirit pass through the heavenly gates.

The dust of this true hero lies, as he requested, surrounded by the remains of those "brown brethren" whom he led and loved so long, when all the world reviled them and persecuted them and said all manner of evil against them falsely. In 1908 the memory of this man will have blessed us for a full century. Shall not a more appropriate token of our esteem replace the little slab that now marks that hallowed grave? And yet no monument can be raised to the memory of David Zeisberger so valuable or so significant as the little pile of his own manuscripts collected by Edward Everett and deposited by him under lock and key, in a special case in the library of Harvard University. Here are fourteen manuscripts, including a Delaware Indian dictionary, a hymn book, a harmony of the Gospels, a volume of litanies and liturgies, and a volume of sermons to children.

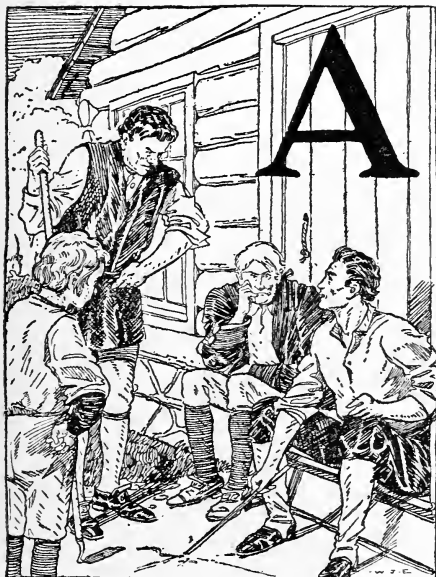
CHAPTER VI

Clark's Birth and Parentage. — Wholesomeness of the Family's Home Life. — Achievements of George and his Five Brothers. — George's Lack of Book-learning. — How he became a Surveyor. — Great Opportunities enjoyed by Surveyors in his Day. — His Introduction to the West. — Learns of George Washington's Great Acquisitions of Land. — How Clark acquired his Craving for Liquor. — His Acquaintance with the Rev. David Jones, Missionary to the Shawnees. — Their Encampment near the Site of Wheeling, W. Va. — A Trip to Pittsburg. — His Claim for a Piece of Land on the Ohio. — Takes Service in Dunmore's War. — His Work as a Surveyor in Kentucky. — Becomes a Leader of Pioneers into Kentucky. — The Conflict between Clark and the Transylvania Company. — He becomes the Leader of the Kentucky Movement. — His Brilliant Military Leadership in the Conquest of Illinois. — The Founding of Louisville. — Clark draws a Plan of the Future City. — His Efforts to induce Immigration to the Lower Ohio. — He is discarded by the State of Virginia.



CHAPTER VI

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK: FOUNDER OF LOUISVILLE



ABOUT two miles east of Charlottesville, Virginia, and more than a mile south of Thomas Jefferson's famous homestead, Monticello, on a sunny knoll by the little Rivanna River, stood the humble

farmer's home in which George Rogers Clark was born, November 19, 1752.

The baby's father and mother, John Clark and Ann Rogers Clark, had moved into Albemarle

County two years before from King-and-Queen County, Virginia, where they had been married in 1749. Their first child was born August 1, 1750, and was given his grandfather's name, Jonathan; this second son was given the name George Rogers, from one of his mother's brothers — as though his parents had looked with prophetic vision through the long years to a time when the baby should become the idol and savior of Kentucky, and had named him from a Kentucky pioneer.

It was a busy farmer's home to which the young child came and in which he received the first hard lessons of life. His parents were sturdy, hard-working people, like their ancestors as far back as the records went, even to the first John Clark, who came from England to Virginia about the same time that the Puritans came to Plymouth Rock, or to Giles Rogers, on his mother's side, who also came from England at very nearly the same time. Giles Rogers's son John married Mary Byrd of the well-known Virginian Byrd family, and George Rogers

Clark's mother was the second daughter of that union.

Who the boy's playmates may have been we cannot know; his brother Jonathan was two years his elder, and the two were probably comrades together on the nursery floor and on the green lawn before the farmhouse. When George was three years of age his sister Ann was born; and two years after that, in 1757, his brother John was born. It has been said that George Clark may have had Thomas Jefferson as a playmate by the Rivianna, but there is some doubt as to this, though the friendship of the two in later life was undoubtedly warmer because of the proximity of their boyhood homes. George's father's land ran down and adjoined that of Randolph Jefferson — Thomas Jefferson's father. If the two boys who were to become so famous met and played together it was probably at the Jefferson Mill, where, it is said, George Clark used to be sent with grist. As the Clark family moved away from this neighborhood in 1757, when George was only

five years old, it does not seem likely that he was sent to mill with grist very often.

Soon after John Clark, Jr., was born, George's father and mother determined upon removing from the Rivianna farm to land patented and surveyed by Mrs. Clark's father in Caroline County, Virginia, on the headwaters of York River and just south of the upper Rappahannock. So, late in the year 1757, we find the father and mother and the four children, with all their worldly possessions, on their eastward journey to their new home. The Rivianna farm had been sold for fifteen hundred dollars, and the family can probably be said to have been in comfortable circumstances for those days. None of the four children were of an age to share in the hardships of this removal, but for the two eldest it must have been an epoch-making event. Jonathan and George were old enough to enjoy the novelty of the long journey, — the scenes along the busy roads, the taverns where all was bustle and confusion, the villages with their shops and stores, the cities where the children must

have felt swallowed up in noise. But at last the new home was reached, and the family was busily at work preparing for the next year's crops.

Of the Caroline County home of the Clarks we know little save the happy record of births of children; yet this in itself gives us a large picture of the merry household, its great joys, and the host of little troubles which intensified the gladness and hallowed it. Within three years Richard Clark was born; Edmund was born September 25, 1762; Lucy, September 15, 1765; Elizabeth, February 11, 1768; William, August 1, 1770, his brother Jonathan's twentieth birthday; and Frances, January 20, 1773. Jonathan and George were soon old enough to be little fathers to the younger children, and Ann must have been able to help her mother to mend the clothes for her rollicking brothers at a comparatively early age; and I do not doubt for a moment that there was a good deal of mending to be done for these boys, for in later life we know they loved adventure, and they must have had many a boyish contest of strength and speed

with little thought of how many stitches it would take to make things whole again. This was a fine farmer's family to look in at of a summer's morning or a winter's night — just such a family as old Virginia was to depend upon in the hard days of the Revolution now drawing on apace. And though you looked the Colonies through from Northern Maine to Southern Georgia, you could not have found by another fireside six boys in one family who were to gain so much fame in their country's service as these six. Jonathan was one of the first men to enter the American army, and he became a lieutenant-colonel with a splendid record before the war was ended. His brothers John and Edmund, and perhaps Richard, were in the Revolutionary armies; all four were recipients of Virginia bounty lands at the close of the war. George Rogers Clark in the meantime became the hero of the most famous military expedition in Western history, — the capture of Vincennes and its British fort and Governor; and William, the next to the youngest in that merry crowd of ten children, was to write

his name high on the pillar of fame as joint leader of the memorable Lewis and Clark Expedition through the Louisiana Territory to the Pacific Ocean in 1804.

It was surely no accident that these lads grew into daring, able men, for good blood will tell; and Virginia in that day was giving the world her richest treasures lavishly on the altar of liberty. I know of no picture of the father of these six boys; but the pictures of George and William are remarkably similar, showing a strong mark which must have come directly from one of the grandfathers, either on the Clark or Rogers side of the family. We may be sure Farmer Clark and his wife exerted a strong, wise influence on their children, and Jonathan and George were called upon at an early age to assist in the management of the children, to settle disputes, to tie up injured fingers, to reprimand, and to praise. And in the school of the home and the family circle these boys received the best and about the only education they ever had; and it would be well if many a boy nowadays would

learn more in the home of patient, wise parents and a little less from books.

The Clark boys, at least George Clark, would have been benefited by a little more schooling in books, especially a speller. It is quite sure that George did not take full advantage of even the few school privileges that he did have; but while all his letters of later life are poorly spelled, that may have been his principal weakness, and in other branches he may have succeeded much better; we know he did in one. For nine months he was under the instruction of Donald Robertson, under whom James Madison, afterwards President of the United States, studied at about the same time. Strangely enough this boy, who would not learn to be careful with letters, became proficient in the matter of figures and did well in that most difficult of studies, mathematics.

In Clark's day a boy proficient in mathematics did not have to look far for a profession which was considered both honorable and lucrative, and that was the surveyor's profession. It was doubly enticing to a youth of brains and

daring; the call for surveyors to go out into the rich empire beyond the Alleghanies was loud and continuous, and had been since Lord Fairfax sent that young Virginia surveyor into the singing forests of the Upper Potomac before the outbreak of the Old French War; and from George Washington down, you may count many boys who went into the West as surveyors and became the first men of the land. The surveyor had many, if not all, the experiences of the soldier; and every boy in Virginia envied the soldier of the French War. The surveyor found the good lands, and here and there surveyed a tract for himself; this, in time, would become of great value. The surveyor knew the Indians and their trails; he knew where the best hunting-grounds and salt-licks were located; he knew where the swamps lay, and the fever-fogs that clung to them; he knew the rivers, their best fishing-pools, and how far up and down they were navigable; he was acquainted with everything a man would wish to know, and he knew of things which every man wished to escape, — floods, famines,

skulking redskins, fevers. For these reasons the surveyors became the men needed by generals to guide the armies, by the great land-companies to point out right fields for speculation, by transportation companies and quartermasters and traders to designate the best paths to follow through the black forests. The tried, experienced surveyor was in an admirable position to secure a comfortable fortune for his labor. While Washington (the largest landholder in America in Clark's day — and half his lands in the West) selected in person much of his own land, yet, as we have seen, the time came when he employed William Crawford to find new lands for him.

Perhaps young Clark came but slowly to a realization that he could enter the fine profession of a surveyor; but when the time came to decide he seized upon the opportunity and the opening with utmost enthusiasm and energy. Both of his grandfathers had been surveyors to a greater or less extent; possibly their old instruments were in his father's possession. If so, these were taken out and dusted, and the boy was set to

work surveying, probably, his father's farm. Its dimensions were well known, and the boy could be sure of the accuracy or inaccuracy of his experiments. In time George probably was called upon to do odd pieces of surveying in the neighborhood in which he lived; thus the days and the years went by, each one fitting the lad for his splendid part on the world's stage of action. The first act in the drama was Clark's introduction to the West — the land of which he had so often dreamed, and which he now in his twentieth year went to see.

We cannot be sure just when young Clark set out from his home, but we find him in the little town of Pittsburg early in the summer of 1772, and we can well suppose he made the long trip over Braddock's Road from Virginia with some friends or neighbors from Caroline County, with whom he joined himself for the purpose of looking at the land of which he had heard so much, and possibly picking out a little tract of land in the Ohio Valley for himself. As a surveyor of some experience he was in a position to offer

his services to any one desiring them, and thus turn an honest penny in the meantime.

Of the wars and bloody skirmishes fought around this town every Virginia boy had heard; through all of George Rogers Clark's youth great questions were being debated here in these sunny Alleghany meadows or in the shadowy forests — and the arguments were of iron and lead. The French had come down the rivers from the Great Lakes to seize the Ohio Valley; the colonists had pushed slowly across the Alleghanies to occupy the same splendid land. Nothing but war could have settled such a bitter quarrel; and, as the Clark boy now looked for the first time upon the relics of those small but savage battles, his heart no doubt warmed to his Virginian patriots who had saved the West to America. How little did the lad know that there was another savage war to be fought for this Ohio Valley, and that he himself was to be its hero!

All along the route to Pittsburg the boy and his comrades, whoever they may have been, kept

their eyes open for good farm sites; perhaps they were surprised to find that all the land beside and adjacent to Braddock's Road was already "taken up." Washington himself had acquired that two-hundred-and-thirty-two-acre tract in Great Meadows where Fort Necessity stood; not far from Stewart's Crossing (Connellsville, Pa.) Washington had the other piece of land with the mill on it. Everywhere Clark went in the West he found land which had been taken up by the shrewd Mount Vernon farmer or his agents. I do not believe Clark begrudged Washington a single acre, but was, on the other hand, pleased to know that the Colonel was to receive some good return for all his hard campaigning in the West in addition to his paltry pay as an officer.

Clark passed as a young gentleman among the strange, rough populace of infant Pittsburg, where fighting, drinking, and quarrelling were going on in every public place; I can see the boy as he went about the rude town and listened to the talk of the traders and the loungers who

filled the taverns and stores. It might have been at this time that the boy first began to satisfy an honest thirst with dishonest liquids, which would in time become his worst enemy and sadly dull the lustre of as bright a name as any man could win. Of course we must remember that at that day it was highly polite and gentlemanly to take an "eye-opener" every morning and a "night-cap" every night, and drink the health of friends often between times; yet no young man but was injured by this awakening of an unknown craving, and, in the case of our hero, it was to prove a craving that would cost him almost all the great honors that he should win.

The lad looked with wide-open eyes, no doubt, at the remains of old Fort Duquesne, where many brave Virginians had lost their lives; for many had been fiendishly put to death by savages driven to bitter hatred by French taunts and made inhuman by French brandy. He must have been greatly interested in little Fort Pitt, which had withstood the wild attacks of Pontiac's most desperate hell-hounds of war, the Shawnees.

Here, if anywhere on the continent, men had been brave; here, if anywhere, men had dropped into deathless graves. He was greatly interested in the future, though the ringing notes of the past must have stirred his heart deeply; and I can see the lad with bended head listening to catch every word of a speaker who would talk of the present feeling of the dreaded Shawnees, who refused to acknowledge that the Six Nations had any right to sell to white men their fine hunting-grounds between the Ohio and the Tennessee.

When we hear directly of Clark in Pittsburg he was in admirably good company and well spoken of; he had fallen in with the Rev. David Jones, the enterprising Baptist missionary from New Jersey, who had come into the West on a joint mission concerning both the possibilities of missionary service among the Shawnees on the Scioto, and Franklin's proposed settlement on the eastern bank of the Ohio River. He was, therefore, a prospector for land and for missionary openings — a good man for the lad

Clark to know. Mr. Jones was thirty-six years of age, enthusiastic and brave, or he would not have been on the Ohio in 1772. He was old enough to remember well the story of the Old French War, as well as Pontiac's Rebellion, and the story of the West from that day down. Of this, no doubt, the two talked freely. Mr. Jones kept a diary, and his record for Tuesday, June 9, reads: ". . . Left Fort Pitt in company with Mr. George Rogers Clark, and several others, who were disposed to make a tour through this new world." Gliding on down the Ohio, the canoe and its adventurous pilgrims were glad to get safely by the Mingo town near Steubenville, Ohio, whose Indian inhabitants (remnants of the Iroquois Indians, in the West known as Mingoes) were desperate savages, canoe plundering being the least harm that might be expected from them. Farther down, at the mouth of Grave Creek, near where Wheeling, West Virginia, now stands, the party camped; here Mr. Jones's interpreter, David Owens, joined them, having come across country from the Monongahela River.



REV. DAVID JONES

Companion of George Rogers Clark



This spot was to become an important point on the Upper Ohio; it was to become well known to the young adventurer, who now looked upon it for the first time; it was soon to become his first home in the West. But for the present he went on with Mr. Jones. The party proceeded as far down as the mouth of the Little Kanawha River, where Parkersburg, West Virginia, now stands. Returning up the river June 24, they reached Grave Creek within two weeks; the party, including at least Higgins and the interpreter Owens together with Jones and Clark, started on an overland trip to the Monongahela. Jones records:

“ . . . Therefore moved up to Grave Creek, leaving there our canoes; crossed the desert (wilderness) to Ten Mile Creek, which empties into [the] Monongahela. . . . The season was very warm; all except myself had loads to carry, so that on the 2d day of July, with much fatigue we arrived to the inhabitants [at the settlements], faint, weak, weary, and hungry — especially Mr. Clark and myself.”

The size of the settlement can be judged from the fact that on the second Sunday of Mr.

Jones's stay on George's Creek he preached to a congregation of about two hundred.

On July 14 the four travellers set out again overland for Fort Pitt. They reached the fort on Wednesday, July 22, and the Virginia boy was probably glad to leave the forests and the river for a while and rest quietly in the little village of Pittsburg. For one thing, he had some letters to write, and we can imagine how anxious the friends at home were to hear from him. Would he like the country? Would he wish to stay in the West? Would he want the other members of the family to emigrate there too? These were some of the questions his parents and brothers and sisters were asking in the old home in Caroline County as the summer days went by. We are certain that Clark was immensely pleased with all he had seen; whether it was pushing a canoe down the rivers, or sleeping on a river's shore with the water babbling beside him, or carrying a pack over the "blind" trails of the old Southwest, he loved the land, its freshness, the freedom of its forests, the air

of hope and adventure which pervaded everything and everybody. All this appealed to him and fascinated him.

After a good rest he hurried on home in the wake of his glowing letters, to enforce them, and if possible to induce the home people to come quickly to obtain the good lands before they were all taken. Before he went it is probable that he entered his claim for a piece of land on the Ohio near the mouth of Fish Creek, some thirty miles below the present site of Wheeling. How interesting must have been that home-coming! What a fine picture that would be, if we could see the young lad, who was to be the hero of the West, sitting before his father's doorstep, describing to a silent audience of relatives and neighbors the grandeur and greatness of the West, the crowds of immigrants, the growing villages, the conflicts between the white and the red men! Perhaps he drew a rough map of the Ohio in the sand at the foot of the front doorsteps, showing where his claim was located, and where Washington's rich tracts were located. Then he told of

the Ohio, its islands and its fierce eddies, of the Indian trails that wound along on the "hog-backs" from settlement to settlement, of the great mounds which the ancient giants (as people once thought the mound-building Indians were) built beside the Ohio. And then at last he told of his purpose to return and live in that country and grow up with it.

The records of the next few years were very much confused. Young Clark visited various portions of the West, perhaps remaining longest at a claim he took up near the mouth of Grave Creek, on the present site of Moundsville, West Virginia, from which point he addressed letters to his brother Jonathan, January 9, 1773. In the Spring of the next year he formed one of Captain Cressap's party assembled at Wheeling in readiness for service in Dunmore's War. In this war Clark saw considerable service, following Dunmore's wing of the army, but not participating in the battle at Point Pleasant, which was fought by General Lewis. In the Spring of the year following, 1775, we find Clark returning

again to his original mission in the West, — that of surveying land and securing tracts for himself. “I have engaged,” he wrote his brother Jonathan from Stewart’s Crossing, “as a deputy surveyor under Cap’n Hancock Lee, for to lay out lands on ye Kentuck, for ye Ohio company, at ye rate of 80£ pr. year, and ye privilege of taking what land I want.” Midsummer found him at Leestown, a mile below Frankfort, seventy miles up the Kentucky River, where he said fifty families would be living by Christmas time. The public, however, needed the service of the young man, and it is plain that his experience in the war had been serviceable, for he was made commander of the scattered militia of Kentucky. During the next Winter, however, we find him again in Virginia; it is probable that his constant moving about had brought advantages, though his private affairs may have suffered more or less from neglect. The Spring of the next year he was back in Kentucky, and soon, in no uncertain way, the leader of the busy swarms of pioneers. “He was brave, energetic, bold,” writes William

H. English, "prepossessing in appearance, of pleasing manners, and in fact with all the qualities calculated to win from a frontier people. The unorganized and chaotic condition of the company needed such a man, and the man had come."

It is interesting to notice the conflict which was precipitated between Clark as leader of the pioneers and Richard Henderson's Transylvania Company, and a pleasure to note that Clark never seemed to speak or act in a vindictive way with reference to Henderson's questionable purchase; in fact he wrote to his brother in 1775:

"Colonel Henderson is here and claims all ye country below Kentucke. If his claim should be good, land may be got reasonable enough, and as good as any in ye world. My father talked of seeing this land in August. I shall not advise him whether to come or not; but I am convinced that if he once sees ye country he will never rest until he gets on it to live. I am ingrossing all ye land I possibly can, expecting him."

It is plain from this quotation that Richard Henderson was the friend of the Kentucky

pioneer. But there was a very important question to be settled immediately; did Kentucky belong to Virginia or was it independent? What was its political status? It was decided to get at the facts of the case, and Clark was instrumental before all others in calling a mass meeting of Kentucky pioneers at Harrodstown, June 6, 1776, where he expected that two or more "agents" would be selected by the people with general power to consult Virginia as to the legal status of "Transylvania." Clark arrived late at this meeting, and on arrival found that he himself, and John Gabriel Jones, had been selected, not as agents, but as actual "members of the Virginia Legislature," to represent a County of Kentucky. The Transylvania Company had performed its important mission, and Richard Henderson was reimbursed for any losses incurred. George Rogers Clark now steps into the position occupied by Henderson as the leader and sustainer of the Kentucky movement.

The brilliancy of Clark's military leadership during the next few years, while he was effecting

a conquest of Illinois, has entirely put into shade the genuine influence and merit of his service previously rendered. No herald of empire in the Middle West who was especially prominent in military affairs did more to accelerate and assure the victory of the army of axe-bearing pioneers than did George Rogers Clark in these critical years, 1775, 1776, and 1777. He fell heir, though a mere boy, to a day's responsibility and taxing toils relinquished by Richard Henderson; and it would not be too much to say, perhaps, that were we to omit the humble, less spectacular services that were performed in these three years, or the renowned service heroically performed in 1778 and 1779, the nation could more easily spare those of the later period. But as Clark now went eastward as a delegate to the Virginia Legislature, he appreciated more and more that the danger of Kentucky lay in the two British forts at Kaskaskia and Vincennes; not because of the proximity of the troops there located, but because of the baneful influence exerted upon all the neighboring Indian tribes

by English officers and American renegades who occupied them. The campaign in Illinois, prosecuted with so much brilliancy and renown, had for its vital motive not the conquest of thousands of forest-strewn miles of wilderness, but rather the salvation of the pioneer settlers in *Kentucky*. Any other view of the matter would be a serious error.

The proud city of Louisville dates its founding from Clark's famous Illinois campaign, for while descending the Ohio River he left some twenty families on Corn Island, May 27, 1778, who were the first of their race to make a permanent home within the sound of the chattering waters of the historic Falls of Ohio, first visited by La Salle over a hundred years before. In less than a year the settlement was moved to the Kentucky shore, and a fort was built at the foot of what is now Twelfth Street, in what was then the town of Falls of Ohio, the present Louisville. General Clark may be justly called the founder of that city, as it was his decision that made "The Falls" the rendezvous and metropolis of

the Lower Ohio. "This action," writes Mr. English, "and the security given by the forts he caused to be built there, attracted the first settlers and fixed the future destiny of Louisville, Jeffersonville, and New Albany. . . . Clark undoubtedly gave the matter much thought, and looked far into the future in making this selection. He expected two great cities to arise some day at the Falls; first Louisville, to be followed later, as the country became populous, by one on the other side of the river, which he hoped would bear his name. But, until Virginia made the grant for Clarksville, the plan of what he expected would be a great city at Louisville absorbed his attention." One of his first acts was to draw a map of the future city, marking the public and private divisions of land as he would have had them located; in this plan he left a number of vacant spaces for public parks, and it is one of the vain regrets of the citizens of the present city that the plan of General Clark in this respect could not have been remembered.

It is important to notice that Clark believed

that the best way to maintain the conquest of Illinois was by inducing immigration to the Lower Ohio and the building up of a strong pioneer colony, not in Illinois, but along the river. "Our only chance at present," he wrote to Colonel John Todd, the Governor of Illinois County, "to save that country is by encouraging the families; but I am sensible nothing but land will do it. I should be exceedingly cautious in doing anything that would displease the Government [Virginia], but their present interest, in many respects obvious to us here, calls so loudly for it, that I think, sir, that you might even venture to give a deed for forty or fifty thousand acres of land at said place at the price that Government may demand for it."

The place referred to here is not Louisville, but near the mouth of the Ohio River. In fact it is very plain from many sources that Clark was the prime mover in the settlement of the Lower Ohio up to the year 1783, when he was wantonly and ignominiously turned adrift by the State of Virginia, which then owed him thirty thousand

dollars, with only four shillings in its treasury. The latter portion of Clark's life is not one which we are proud to remember, but he never sank so low that the nation has been able to forget his brilliant and persistent courage. There was ground for his bitter cry: "I have given the United States half the territory they possess, and for them to suffer me to remain in poverty, in consequence of it, will not redound much to their honor." It is little comfort that nearly thirteen years after his death the sum justly owed to the man was paid to his heirs. The memory of Clark's leadership of the army that bore the sword is a precious inheritance; the facts respecting his equally important enthusiasm and earnestness in leading the scattered cohorts of the army bearing the broadaxe should likewise have a place in history.

CHAPTER VII

Importance of the Cumberland Road. — Expected to be a Bond of Union between East and West. — Roads of Former Days only Indian Trails. — The Cumberland Road made between 1806 and 1840. — Promoted by Gallatin and Clay. — Undertaken by Congress, 1802. — The Road a Necessity for the Stream of Immigration after the Revolution. — Open for Traffic to the Ohio, 1818. — Other Internal Improvements now undertaken. — The first Macadamized Roads earlier than this Cumberland Road. — The Great Cost of Macadamizing this Road. — Disputes as to the Government's Constitutional Right to build it. — Ohio demands that the Road be continued, according to the Act admitting her to Statehood. — The Road's Progress to Vandalia. — Unanimity of Western Members in Favor of the Road. — Toll-gates are erected. — Lively Scenes on the Road in Old Times. — Sums appropriated for it by Congress. — Why Henry Clay championed the Undertaking.

CHAPTER VII

HENRY CLAY: PROMOTER OF THE FIRST AMERICAN HIGHWAY



IT may be said without fear of contradiction that the subject of the Panama and Nicaragua canals has not received more popular attention in this day and generation than our first and greatest na-

tional highway — legally known as the Cumberland Road, from its starting point — received in the first generation of the nineteenth century.

For it was clear to the blindest that the great empire west of the Alleghanies, of which Washington dreamed and planned, where Zeisberger labored and built the first home, and to which brave Henderson and Putnam led their colonies of patriots, must soon be bound to the Union by something stronger than Indian trails. France and England had owned this West and lost it; could the little Republic born in the fierce fires of 1775 hold what they — proud kingdoms — had lost? Could it mock the European doctrine that, in time, mountains inevitably become boundaries of empires? Those little States of which Berkeley sang, placed by the hand of God as rebukes to lustful and universal dominion — were they needed in the destinies of America? Such questions were asked freely in those hard days which succeeded the Revolution. Then the whole world looked upon the East and the West as realms as distinct as Italy and France, and for the same geographical reason. England and Spain had their vast “spheres of influence” marked out as plainly in America then as Germany and France

and Russia have theirs marked in the China of to-day. Kentucky became a hotbed of foreign emissaries, and the whirl of politics in that pivotal region a decade after the Revolution will daunt even the student of modern Kentucky politics. So patriotic and so faithful is that eastern West to-day that it is difficult to believe by what a fragile thread it hung to the trembling Republic on the Atlantic slope — “one nation to-day, thirteen to-morrow” — in those black days when Wilkinson and Burr and even George Rogers Clark “played fast and loose with conspiracy.”

The Indian trails were the threads which first bound the East and the West. Soon a large number of these threads were twisted, so to speak, into a few cords — hard, rough pioneer roadways which wound in and out among the great trees and morasses in the forest shades. Then came a few great, well-built (for their day) roadways which meant as much commercially and politically, in their age, as the steel hawsers which in our time have bound and welded a great people so closely together.

The greatest of these old-time highways was that wide avenue opened from Cumberland, Maryland, through Pennsylvania, the "Panhandle," and on across Ohio, between 1806 and 1840. It is popularly known as the Old National Road; its legal name was the Cumberland Road. It was the logical result of Washington's cherished plan of binding the trans-Alleghany region firmly to the East. It was largely promoted by Albert Gallatin, who in 1806 made a report, as Secretary of the Treasury, strongly urging such works of internal improvement. But its best friend and staunchest champion was Henry Clay; and beside it stands to-day a monument to his memory near the little hamlet which bears his name — Claysville, Pennsylvania.

This great road was born in the Act of Congress of 1802, which enabled the State of Ohio to enter the Union. Section VII of that act decreed that the money received from the sale of one-twentieth of the public lands in Ohio should be applied to building roads from the navigable waters of Atlantic streams to and within the new



HENRY CLAY

Statesman and Abolitionist

State "under the authority of Congress." The matter was put in charge of the War Department, and soon commissioners appointed by the President of the United States were surveying a route for a national road from East to West. The first government appropriation was dated 1806, and was thirty thousand dollars.

Words cannot describe the intense wave of enthusiasm which swept over the West when it was known that this mighty new power in Western life was actually to come into existence. Our government never carried out a more timely or popular measure, for it was as timely as it was popular. When the Revolutionary War was over, a great stream of immigration poured into the West, but the Indian War of 1790-95 severely checked it. With the treaty of Greenville the great social movement again began, and the War of 1812, in turn, again interfered to postpone the genuine settlement of the old Northwest. This national road was begun at Cumberland, Maryland, in 1811, and, even in the dark days of the war, was slowly pushed along over the

Alleghanies by way of Uniontown and Washington, Pennsylvania, toward Wheeling on the Ohio River. When the war was over it was nearing its destination, and in 1818 was open for traffic to the Ohio.

If studied closely, the last three years of the second decade of the nineteenth century are fascinating years to a student of our national expansion. The beginning of successful steam navigation on the Ohio and its tributaries, and the completion of the Cumberland National Road to the Ohio, were largely responsible for this. Such impressive material advances, coming at the time when both Great Britain and the Indians had been effectually disposed of (so far as national growth was concerned), gave enthusiasm to the eager spirit of the time. Great deeds were proposed; great economic questions began to be faced and fought out as never before. The many-sided question of internal improvements, the beginning of the Erie Canal, the opening of the Lehigh coal fields, the problem of applying the power of steam to vehicles as well as vessels, the difficult

problem solved later by the Missouri Compromise, and the one involved in Birkbeck's English Prairie settlement in Illinois, the problem of steam navigation on the Great Lakes, — all these and many more like them were the topics of the hour when this Cumberland Road, the first of all our great feats of improvement, reached and then threw itself across the Ohio River. Measured by the hopes it inspired and not by miles, judged by the power it was expected to exert in national life and not by the ruins that now mark its ancient track, this road from the Potomac to the Mississippi must be considered a most significant monument to those wild but splendid years when as a people we were first facing some of the most fundamental questions of existence. There comes in every boy's life a period when he shoots suddenly out and up to the stature of a man. Young America sprang up like that in those momentous years.

Nearly a score of years before the Cumberland Road was built, the first macadamized road in the United States, the Lancaster Turnpike,

was constructed by a private company between Philadelphia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania had macadamized portions of her highway across the mountains by way of Chambersburg and Bedford to Pittsburg. But on no highway was the principle of macadamization carried so far as on the Cumberland Road. The cost was found to be prodigious. Between Cumberland, Maryland, and Uniontown, Pennsylvania, it was \$9745 per mile instead of \$6000, which the commissioners estimated, without bridging. Between Uniontown and Wheeling the cost ran up to the startling average of about \$13,000 per mile — within \$800 of the estimated cost per mile of the Erie Canal. Too liberal contracts accounted, in part, at least, for this extravagance. The stones used were reduced to four ounces each and spread in three layers, traffic being permitted for a time over each layer in succession. No covering was laid until these layers had become comparatively solid. Catch-water drains, with a gradual curvature, were located at proper distances.

Several of the officers in charge of the work stand high in the estimation of their countrymen. There was McKee, who fell at Buena Vista, and Williams, who gave his life to his country at Monterey; there were Gratiot, Delafield, Bliss, Bartlett, Hartzell, Colquit, Cass, Vance, Pickell; and there was Mansfield, who, as major-general, fell at Antietam. Among the names in one of the surveying corps is recorded that of Joseph E. Johnston.

This national road rested legally upon an interpretation of the Constitution held by those who favored internal improvement as a means of investing the Government's surplus. A great plan had been outlined in 1806 by Albert Gallatin, then Secretary of the Treasury. The Constitution gives the Government the right to regulate post-roads and the mails. This implied the right, the promoters of internal improvement argued, to build roads, with the sanction of the States through which such roads passed. There were those who opposed the theory, and even from the very beginning there was strong

opposition by strict constructionists to the road appropriations. The very first vote on the first appropriation was 66 to 50, showing that at the start there was almost an even division on the legality of the question. The opposition increased as greater and still greater sums were asked of the Treasury each year. Three hundred thousand dollars was asked in 1816, and more in 1818. In the next year the tremendous amount of \$535,000 was asked for and voted. It is little wonder that Congress was staggered by the amount of money absorbed by this one road. What if other national roads proposed — through the South and northward from Washington to Buffalo — should demand equally large sums? It was easily to be seen that the entire revenue of the Government could readily be spent in filling up the bog-holes of American roads with limestone.

Yet the policy of internal improvements was a popular one, advocated by politicians and applauded by the people; and every year, despite the same Constitutional arguments advanced,



ALBERT GALLATIN
Promoter of the Cumberland Road

and though at times the opposing forces had their way, the Cumberland Road bills came back for reconsideration, and were at last passed.

But it finally appeared that the matter of getting the road repaired when once it was built was a more serious question than the mere building problem. Members of Congress who had been persuaded to give their vote for the initial expense bolted outright on voting money each year to extend the road farther westward and also repair the portions already built. The matter was precipitated in 1822, when a bill was presented to the House and Senate providing that toll-gates be erected and that the Government should charge travellers for the use of the road. The bill passed both branches of Congress, but it was vetoed immediately by President Monroe on the ground that the national Government could not collect toll unless, as sovereign, it owned the ground that the road occupied. This was an interesting question, and one of great importance, bringing as it did upon Congress an earnest discussion bordering on the intricate

problem of States Rights. Mr. Clay urged that if the Government had a right to build the road it had the right to preserve it from falling into decay. Of course there was now, as always, a strong opposition to the road on the general ground of Constitutionality; but those who were aware that their objections to the road would be overruled by the majority, in any event, took the consistent ground that if they could not prevent the enactments of laws they could, by passing laws creating toll-gates, relieve the Government at least from the expense of repairing the road.

As President Monroe, however, did not agree with or believe in the original right to build the road, he was compelled to deny the Government's right to charge toll on roads in the various States. He outlined his conclusions and returned the bill vetoed.

A cry which shook the country went up from the West. In the act which admitted Ohio to the Union, five per cent of money received from the sale of lands was, as before noted, to be applied by the Government to the building of roads to

and in the West. Of this five per cent, three was to be devoted to building roads within the State of Ohio, and two per cent toward the expense of building a road from Atlantic tide-water to Ohio, according to a supplementary law passed March 3, 1803. By allowing the Cumberland Road to stop at Ohio's eastern boundary, the Government was "breaking faith" with the West. This must not be, and therefore in 1824 President Monroe found an excuse to sign another Cumberland Road bill. The technicality honestly raised by Monroe was against the spirit of the times and the genius of the age. Legal technicalities were put aside, and the great road swept on westward; it was ordered to be projected through the capitals of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to Jefferson, Missouri. It reached Columbus in 1833, and Indianapolis about 1840. It was graded to Vandalia, then the capital of Illinois, and marked out to Jefferson, Missouri, but was never completed under national auspices.

It is to be observed that the Cumberland Road went forward largely because of the compact

between the State of Ohio and the national Government. Knowing, as we now do, that the road was one of the most important material items in our national growth, it must seem fortunate from any point of view that the Ohio compact was made when and as it was. By its terms the Government was to build a road with the money accruing from a certain source. The originators of the compact seemed to have no real knowledge of the questions at issue, either concerning the amount of money needed for the purpose of building the road from tide-water to the Ohio River, or of the amount that was likely to accrue from the source indicated. What if the fund produced from the sales of land was not sufficient to build the road? For some time the appropriations were made on the theory that the money would eventually come back into the treasury from the land sales; but it soon became plain that there was not a hope left that even fifty per cent of the amount expended would return from the expected source.

When this fact became patent, the friends of

the road were put to their utmost to maintain its cause; some interesting points were raised that could not but weigh heavily with men of generous good sense, such as this: surveys had been made outlining the course of the road far in advance of the portion that was being actually built, and some of the States were planning all their roads with reference to this great Appian Way that was to be the main highway across the continent. Large preparations had been made here and there along the proposed route by those owning property, in the way of building taverns and road houses, not to speak of villages that sprang up in a night at points where it seemed certain the road would meet important branch roads. Throughout the years when the Cumberland Road bills were under discussion it is of particular interest to note how men were influenced by the greater, more fundamental human arguments, rather than by mere technical or legal points. Of course the Western members were without a dissenting voice in favor of the road. And when Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri were

successively admitted to the Union, a similar provision concerning the sale of public lands and road-building was inserted as in the case of Ohio; and though it is not clear that any one believed the source of income was equal to the object to be benefited, yet the magnanimous legislation went on without a pause through the twenties and into the thirties. In the Senate, for instance, the opposition to the road bills could usually depend on two solid votes from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and New York; and one vote, ordinarily, from Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Alabama. On minor points other votes could be temporarily secured, but on the main question there was always a safe majority in favor of the enterprise. However, it is plain the opposition to the road was sectional only in the sense that it came from the States not to be directly benefited. Though two or more New England votes could be depended upon in the Senate to be thrown against a Cumberland Road bill, yet such a man as Edward Everett said in

an address at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1829: "The State of which I am a citizen [Massachusetts] has already paid between one and two thousand dollars toward the construction and repair of that road; and I doubt not she is prepared to contribute her proportion toward its extension to the place of its destination." But, it must be remembered, Everett was one who caught as few others did the spirit of our genius for expansion, the man who in 1835 uttered the marvellous words: "Intercourse between the mighty interior West and the seacoast is the great principle of our commercial prosperity."

If there is one practical lesson in all the peculiar history of the one national road that America built (for the others proposed were never constructed), it is with reference to the repairing of the road. At first it seemed that the great question was merely to obtain funds for the first cost of making the road. But it soon appeared that the far greater question was to operate and repair the road; it was well enough that the Government build the road, seemingly, but it was early

realized that a local power must control the road and see to its repairs, or an enormous waste of public money would result. The experience of those years brought home the lesson that the problem of maintenance and operation is far more serious than the problem of original cost.

The objection raised to the Government's erecting toll-gates and collecting tolls, as implying sovereignty over the land occupied by the road, was at last silenced by allowing each State through which the road passed to accept it from the Government as fast as it was completed, and to take charge of its operation and control. Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio accepted completed portions between 1831 and 1834. Toll-gates were immediately erected by State authorities, and tolls collected. From her twelve toll-gates Pennsylvania received over \$37,000 in the twenty months following May 1, 1843. In the most prosperous year in Ohio, 1839, the treasurer of that State received \$62,496.10 from the National Road tolls. What per cent received by toll-gate keepers was

actually turned in cannot be discussed, as those were the "good old days." Each toll-gate keeper, it must be observed, retained two hundred dollars per annum as salary, and five per cent of all receipts above one thousand dollars at this time. This fast and loose system was the means of discovering some great rascals. Between 1831 and 1877 Ohio received \$1,139,795.30 from the Cumberland Road in tolls.

These sober statistics give only a hint of those gay, picturesque days when this highway was a teeming thoroughfare, lined with towns of national importance that are now forgotten, and with thousands of taverns and road-houses, even the foundation-stones of which have vanished from the old-time sites. Great stagecoach lines operated here, known as widely in their day as the railways are now, their proprietors boasting over rival lines in points of speed, safety, and appointments. The largest company on the Cumberland Road was the National Road Stage Company, with headquarters at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The Ohio National Stage

Company was the most important west of the Ohio River. There were the "Good Intent" line, and the "Landlords," "Pioneer," "June Bug," and "Pilot" lines. Fine coaches bore names as aristocratic as our Pullman cars do to-day. There were "trusts" and "combinations," quarrels and lawsuits, worthy of the pen of any sensational magazine-writer or novelist.

The advertisement of an "opposition" stage-coach line of 1837 is of interest on several accounts:

OPPOSITION!

DEFIANCE FAST LINE COACHES

DAILY

FROM WHEELING, VA., to Cincinnati, O., via Zanesville, Columbus, Springfield, and intermediate points.

Through in less time than any other line.

"By opposition the people are well served."

The Defiance Fast Line connects at Wheeling, Va., with Reside & Co.'s Two Superior daily lines to Baltimore, McNair and Co.'s Mail Coach line, via Bedford, Chambersburg, and the Columbia and Harrisburg Rail Roads to Philadelphia being the only direct line from Wheeling —: also with the only coach line from

Wheeling to Pittsburg, via Washington, Pa., and with numerous cross lines in Ohio.

The proprietors having been released on the 1st inst. from burthen of carrying the great mail (which will retard any line), are now enabled to run through in a shorter time than any other line on the road. They will use every exertion to accommodate the travelling public. With stock infinitely superior to any on the road, they flatter themselves they will be able to give general satisfaction; and believe the public are aware, from past experience, that a liberal patronage to the above line will prevent impositions in high rates of fare by any stage monopoly.

The proprietors of the Defiance Fast Line are making the necessary arrangements to stock the Sandusky and Cleveland Routes also from Springfield to Dayton — which will be done during the month of July.

All baggage and parcels only received at the risk of the owners thereof.

JNO. W. WEAVER & Co.,

GEO. W. MANYPENNY,

JNO. YONTZ,

From Wheeling to Columbus, Ohio.

JAMES H. BACON,

WILLIAM RIANHARD,

F. M. WRIGHT,

WILLIAM H. FIFE,

From Columbus to Cincinnati.

The Cumberland Road became instantly a great mail-route to Cincinnati and St. Louis; from these points mails were forwarded by packets to Louisville, Huntsville, Alabama, Nashville, Tennessee, and all Mississippi points. Mails from Washington reached the West in 1837 as follows:

Washington to Wheeling	30 hours
Washington to Columbus	45½ hours
Washington to Indianapolis	65½ hours
Washington to Vandalia	85½ hours
Washington to St. Louis	94 hours

Nashville was reached from Louisville by packet in twenty-one hours, Mobile in eighty hours, and New Orleans in one hundred and sixty-five hours.

Some of the larger appropriations for the Cumberland Road were:

1813	\$140,000
1816	300,000
1819	535,000
1830	215,000
1833	459,000
1834	750,000
1835	646,186
1836	600,000
1838	459,000

The total of thirty-four appropriations from March 29, 1806, to June 17, 1844, was \$6,824,919.33.

The old road was well built; nothing proves this so well as the following advertisement for bids for repairing it in Ohio in 1838:

“Sealed proposals will be received at Toll-gate No. 4, until the 6th day of March next, for repairing that part of the road lying between the beginning of the 23rd and end of the 42nd mile, and if suitable bids are obtained, and not otherwise, contracts will be made at Bradshaw’s hotel in Fairview, on the 8th. Those who desire contracts are expected to attend in person, in order to sign their bonds.

“On this part of the Road three hundred rods or upwards ($82\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet each) will be required on each mile, of the best quality of limestone, broken evenly into blocks not exceeding four ounces in weight each; and specimens of the material proposed must be furnished, in quantity not less than six cubic inches, broken and neatly put up in a box, and accompanying each bid; which will be returned and taken as the standard, both as it regards the quality of the material and the preparation of it at the time of measurement and inspection.

“The following conditions will be mutually understood as entering into, and forming a part of the contract, namely: The 23, 24, and 25 miles to be ready for measurement and inspection on the 25th of July; the 26, 27, and 28 miles on the 1st of August; the 29, 30, and 31 miles on the 15th of August; the 32, 33, and 34 miles on the 1st of September; the 35, 36, 37 miles on the 15th of September; the 38, 39, and 40 miles on the 1st of October; and the 41 and 42 miles, if let, will be examined at the same time.

“Any failure to be ready for inspection at the time above specified, will incur a penalty of five per cent for every two days' delay, until the whole penalty shall amount to 25 per cent on the contract paid. All the piles must be neatly put up for measurement and no pile will be measured on this part of the work containing less than five rods. Whenever a pile is placed upon deceptive ground, whether discovered at the time of measurement or afterward, half its contents shall in every case be forfeited for the use of the road.

“Proposals will also be received at +'. American Hotel in Columbus, on the 15th of March, for hauling broken materials from the penitentiary east of Columbus. Bids are solicited on the 1, 2, and 3 miles counting from a point near the Toll-gate towards the city. Bids will also be received at the same time and place, for



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GENERAL ARTHUR ST. CLAIR
Appointed Governor of Ohio by Congress



collecting and breaking all the old stone that lies along the roadside, between Columbus and Kirkersville, neatly put in piles of not less than two rods, and placed on the outside of the ditches."

The dawning of the era of slack-water navigation and of the locomotive brought the public to the realization, however, that a macadamized road was not in 1838 all the wonder that it was thought to be in 1806. But in its day the Cumberland Road was a tremendous power in opening a new country, in giving hope to a brave but secluded people who had won and held the West for the Union. This was why Henry Clay championed the movement, and why he should be remembered therefor. As a Kentuckian he knew the Western problem, and with the swiftness of genius he caught the true intent and deeper meaning of a great national work such as the building of such a material bond of union. Nothing has done so much for civilization, after the alphabet and the printing press, Macaulay has said, as the inventions which have abridged distance. In those years, quick with hopes and

vast with possibility at the opening of the nineteenth century, the Cumberland Road, stretching its yellow coils out across the Alleghanies and into the prairies, advanced civilization as no other material object did or could have done. "If there is any kind of advancement going on," wrote Bushnell, "if new ideas are abroad and new hopes rising, then you will see it by the roads that are building." This old road, worn out and almost forgotten, its milestones tottering, its thousand taverns silent where once all was life and merriment, is a great monument of days when advancement was a new word, when great hopes were rising and great ideas were abroad. As such it shall be remembered and honored as one of the greatest and most timely acts of promotion our young Government executed.

CHAPTER VIII

Gouverneur Morris's Day-dream of the Coming Blessings of Liberty. — He predicts Artificial Channels from the Lakes to the Hudson. — The Sight of the Caledonian Canal enables him to foresee Wealth for the Interior of America. — Seeing Ships on Lake Erie, he predicts that Ocean Vessels will soon sail on the Lakes. — Inland Navigation a Great Factor in this Country's Development. — Many Rivers not made Navigable for Lack of Engineering Skill. — President Jefferson recommends that the Surplus in the Treasury be used for Internal Improvements. — Jesse Hawley writes Articles in Behalf of an Erie Canal. — A Bill in the New York Legislature for the Same Object. — Hindrances to the Execution of the Project. — Names of Some Notable Friends of the Undertaking. — Erie Canal Bill passed by the New York Legislature, 1817. — Lack of Good Roads necessitates Transportation of Materials for the Canal in Winter only. — Other Difficulties. — Clearing away the Timber and laying out the Track from Albany to Buffalo. — Imported Machinery used for uprooting Trees and Stumps. — Neighboring States urged to Contribute. — Cost and Profits both Greater than Estimated. — Rejoicings at the Opening of the Canal. — The Success of this Canal leads to other Enterprises.

CHAPTER VIII

MORRIS AND CLINTON: FATHERS OF THE ERIE CANAL



As we survey the early period of the nation's history, there appear a number of famous conventions of notables which will ever live in the memory of thoughtful Americans. There are, how-

ever, a number of such gatherings that are not familiar to many, and it is at one of these that any story of the far-famed Erie Canal must begin.

In the year 1777 General Schuyler's army was at Fort Edward, New York, during its slow and sullen retreat before Burgoyne's advancing red-coats. Gouverneur Morris was sent to the army at Fort Edward, and on a certain evening, amid a company of army officers, that brilliant man told a day-dream before the flickering camp-fire. The dream concerned the future of America when once the foreign yoke should be thrown off. In language consonant with the fascinating nature of his theme the speaker described in some detail what would be the result on the minds and hearts of men when liberty for all had been secured, and the inspiring advance in arts and letters, in agriculture and commerce, that would come. He was a dreamer, but his dream became a realization and the wonder of young America. A comrade that night heard his words.

"He announced," wrote that person, Governor Morgan Lewis, then Quartermaster-General, "in language highly poetic, and to which I cannot do justice, that at no very distant day the waters of the great Western inland seas would, by the

aid of man, break through their barriers and mingle with those of the Hudson. I recollect asking him how they were to break through these barriers. To which he replied, that numerous streams passed them through natural channels, and that artificial ones might be conducted by the same routes."

A number of eminent authorities, such as James Geddes, Simeon de Witt, and Elkanah Watson, all leave evidence that the idea of a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson was first brought to men's attention by the man who told his vision to those sleepy Revolutionary officers at Fort Edward.

In his diary of a journey in Scotland in 1795 Morris thus exclaims at the sight of the Caledonian Canal, "When I see this, my mind opens to a view of wealth for the interior of America, which hitherto I had rather conjectured than seen." Six years later he wrote to a friend, after seeing ships on Lake Erie: "Hundreds of large ships will, at no distant period, bound on the billows of these inland seas. . . . Shall I lead

your astonishment up to the verge of incredulity? I will. Know then that one-tenth of the expense borne by Great Britain in the last campaign would enable ships to sail from London through Hudson's River into Lake Erie." Simeon de Witt said in 1822: "The merit of first starting the idea of a direct communication by water between Lake Erie and Hudson's River unquestionably belongs to Mr. Gouverneur Morris. The first suggestion I had of it was from him. In 1803 I accidentally met with him at Schenectady. We put up for the night at the same inn and passed the evening together. He then mentioned the project of 'tapping Lake Erie,' as he expressed it himself, and leading its water in an artificial river, directly across the country to Hudson's River." James Geddes first heard of the early canal idea from Mr. Morris in 1804. "The idea," he said, "of saving so much lockage by not descending to Lake Ontario made a very lively impression on my mind."

Looking back over the colonial history of



GOUVERNEUR MORRIS
Promoter of the Erie Canal

America it is very interesting to note the part that was played in our country's development by inland navigation. Practically all the commerce of the colonies was moved in canoes, sloops, and schooners; the large number of Atlantic seaboard rivers were the roads of the colonies, and there were no other roads. In Pennsylvania and Georgia a few highways were in existence; in the province of New York there were only twelve miles of land carriage. Villages, churches, and courthouses in Maryland and Virginia were almost always placed on the shore of the rivers, for it was only by boat that the people could easily go to meeting or to court. Indeed the capital of the country, Washington, was located upon the Potomac River, partly for the reason that its founders believed that the Potomac was to be the great commercial highway of the eastern half of the continent.

As roads were the arteries of trade and travel it was natural for our forefathers to hold the opinion that to increase the commerce of the country it was necessary only to increase the number

of navigable miles of the rivers. The story of the struggle to improve the navigation of the two rivers, Mohawk and Hudson, upon which the attention of our earliest engineers centred, occupies other pages of this volume; and it is for us to note here the fact merely in passing that, beginning with 1786, strenuous efforts were made to render these waterways, and a large number of less important rivers, navigable. The efforts failed of success, the reason being that engineering skill was not of a grade high enough to master the problem. And consequently, when the nineteenth century dawned, we may say with fair regard to truth that the campaigns that had been waging in a number of the States for the betterment of America's navigation by means of improved rivers had failed and were discarded.

Then it was that public attention was turned to the subject of making artificial water channels, or canals. Generations before this, the great Forth and Clyde Canal in Scotland had been completed by Smeaton; the Royal Canal in

Ireland was finished in 1792; the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Canal in Pennsylvania had been surveyed in 1762, and a few miles of it had been dug in 1794; the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, though surveyed as early as 1764, was not begun until 1804.

It was natural, therefore, that the idea of a canal between the Hudson and Lake Erie should have presented itself forcibly to New Yorkers at this time, and all the latent possibilities were aroused to activity in 1807 by the recommendation made by President Jefferson in his message to Congress in October, that the surplus money in the Treasury of the United States be used for undertaking a large number of internal improvements. Whether or not Jefferson's recommendation or some other preliminary proposal of this kind may have inspired it, a New Yorker named Jesse Hawley was now preparing a series of articles advocating a canal between the Hudson and the Lakes. Before these articles, to which the name of "Hercules" was signed, were ready to appear in print,

Mr. Hawley changed his place of residence to Pittsburg, and, oddly enough, it was in "The Commonwealth," a Pittsburg paper, that the first published broadside in behalf of an Erie canal appeared; this was on the fourteenth day of January, 1807. This series of articles, as a whole, appeared in "The Genesee Messenger," of Canandaigua, weekly from October, 1807, to March, 1808. The author had studied the problem with great earnestness, though the Mohawk River was to be used as a part of the system. In February of the following year the idea gained added impetus and circulation by a bill offered in the New York Legislature; its author was Joshua Forman, a member from Onondaga County, and it read as follows:

"Whereas the President of the United States by his message to Congress, delivered at their meeting in October last, did recommend that the surplus money in the treasury, over and above such sums as could be applied to the extinguishment of the national debt, be appropriated to the great national objects of opening canals and making turnpike roads; And whereas the State of New York, holding the first commercial rank in the

United States, possesses within herself the best route of communication between the Atlantic and Western waters, by means of a canal between the tide-waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie, through which the wealth and trade of that large portion of the United States bordering on the upper lakes would for ever flow to our great commercial emporium; And whereas the Legislatures of several of our sister States have made great exertions to secure to their own States the trade of that wide-extended country west of the Alleghanies to those of this State; And whereas it is highly important that these advantages should as speedily as possible be improved, both to preserve and increase the commerce and national importance of this State: Resolved (if the honourable the Senate concur herein), that a joint committee be appointed to take into consideration the propriety of exploring, and causing an accurate survey to be made of, the most eligible and direct route for a canal to open a communication between the tide-waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie; to the end that Congress may be enabled to appropriate such sums as may be necessary to the accomplishment of that great national object."

For a number of years the great project was held in abeyance by a series of unforeseen events.

First among these was the War of 1812, during which the State of New York was the frontier and saw a number of the most important campaigns. Then, too, the inherent difficulties of the project — the vast amount of ground necessarily to be covered, the low plane of engineering science at that day, the immeasurable difficulties of gaining access to the interior of a heavily wooded country, the low ebb of the financial condition of the State — all combined to strengthen the opposition to the canal. But its friends grew in number and steadily grew in power. First among them was Governor Clinton, who was so closely allied with the great undertaking that its enemies frequently called it “Clinton’s Ditch”; Gouverneur Morris, Fulton, and Livingston (who were just now succeeding in their steamboat enterprise), Simeon de Witt, Thomas Eddy, General Philip Schuyler, Chancellor Kent, and Judges Yates and Platt are remembered as the most influential promoters of America’s first great work of internal improvement.

Strangely enough, one of the most serious

hindrances to the beginning of the work proved in the end to be the great argument in its favor, and that was the War of 1812. The act which gave birth to the canal was passed by the New York Legislature April 15, 1817, and then went before the Council of Revision. "The ordeal this bill met with in the Council of Revision," writes M. S. Hawley in his valuable pamphlet,¹ "came near being fatal to it; it could not have received a two-thirds vote after a veto. The Council was composed of Lieutenant-Governor John Taylor, — acting Governor, as President of the Council, — Chief Justice Thompson, Chancellor Kent, and Judges Yates and Platt. Acting Governor Taylor was openly opposed to the whole scheme. The Chief Justice was also opposed to this bill. Chancellor Kent was in favor of the canal, but feared it was too early for the State to undertake this gigantic work. Judges Yates and Platt were in favor of the bill; but it was likely to be lost by the casting vote of the acting Governor. Vice-President Tompkins

¹ "The Origin of the Erie Canal."

(recently the Governor) entered the room at this stage of the proceedings, and, in an informal way, joined in conversation upon the subject before the Council, and in opposition to this bill. He said: 'The late peace with Great Britain was a mere truce, and we will undoubtedly soon have a renewed war with that country; and instead of wasting the credit and resources of the State in this chimerical project, we ought to employ all our revenue and credit in preparing for war.'

" 'Do you think so, sir?' said Chancellor Kent.

" 'Yes, sir,' replied the Vice-President; 'England will never forgive us for our victories, and, my word for it, we shall have another war with her within two years.'

" The Chancellor, then rising from his seat, with great animation declared,

" 'If we must have war . . . I am in favor of the canal, and I vote for the bill.'

" With that vote the bill became a law."

It is difficult for us to-day to realize what a tremendous undertaking it was to try to throw

this great "Ditch" of Clinton's across those hundreds of miles of forest and swamp which, for so many generations, had been known as the "Long House of the Iroquois." As you fly through that beautiful territory watered by the Mohawk, Seneca, and Onondaga rivers to-day, it is hardly possible to re-create, with any measure of truth, the old-time appearance of the land. It was well into the nineteenth century before a good road was ever built in Central New York; indeed, during the years while the Erie Canal was being built, the necessary materials for the building, and provisions for the builders, were transported thither in the winter season because at that time only was it accessible by any known means of transportation. Think what it meant, then, to dig a great trench through the heavily wooded region where even the road-builders had not had the temerity to go. It was the forest growth that held back the road-maker; the tangled forest, the heavily wooded overgrowth that bound the heavy trees inextricably together. The canal-builder had all that the road-maker

found to combat with above the ground, — the tangled mesh of bush, vine, and tree, — but he had also what was far more difficult to attack and conquer, namely, the tremendous labyrinth of roots that lay beneath the ground. Thus, his task was double that of the road-maker; and look as far as you will through our early history, you will not find an enterprise launched on this continent by any man or any set of men that will compare in daring with the promotion of this great work of interior improvement to which New York now set herself.

For there was no hesitating. Within a very few days of the passing of the act creating the Erie Canal you could have seen surveyors and chainmen pushing out into the shadowy forest-land, driving five lines of stakes across New York toward the setting sun. These men, like those who sent them, were ridiculed everywhere they went by some of the people; but still the ringing blows grew fainter and fainter as those five lines of stakes crept on up the Mohawk, along the Seneca, through poisonous swamps, on the banks

of running rivers, around the shores of the still-lying lakes. Those who ridiculed prophesied that next we would be building a bridge across the Atlantic, and then a tunnel to China beneath the Pacific; but the sneers and ridicule of that portion of the people that will be fools all the time could not stop those earnest stake-drivers or the small army of men, mostly Americans, who came in and worked with pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow.

The two outer lines of stakes were sixty feet apart; this indicated the space from which the forest was to be cleared. Two lines of stakes within these, measuring forty feet apart, represented the exact width of the proposed canal; and the remaining single line of stakes located its mathematical centre. The whole distance of the canal from Albany to Buffalo was divided into three sections, and these sections were subdivided into very small portions, which were let to contractors. The first contract was signed June 27, 1817, and work was begun at historic Rome, New York, on the following Fourth of

July, with appropriate ceremony. After a short address by one of the commissioners, Samuel Young, and amid a burst of artillery, Judge Richardson, the first contractor, threw out the first spadeful of earth.

To present-day readers acquainted with so many wonderful feats of engineering of modern days, the history of the building of this canal must seem commonplace; the marvellous thing about it, after all, was its conception and the campaign of education which brought about its realization. One of the romantic phases of the story, that will forever be of interest to those of us who can never know a primeval forest, was the experience of the engineering corps crashing their way through the New York forests, where the surveyors' stakes could hardly be seen in the dense gloom. Machinery unknown in America at the time was called upon to perform this arduous labor of grubbing and clearing this sixty-foot aisle. One machine, working on the principle of an endless screw connected with a cable, a wheel, and a crank, enabled a single man to

haul down a tree of the largest size without any cutting. The machine being located at a distance of one hundred feet from the foot of the tree, the cable was attached to the trunk fifty or sixty feet from the ground, a crank was turned, the screw revolved, and the tree was soon prostrated, as the force which could be exerted by this principle was irresistible.

A machine for hauling out stumps was constructed and operated as follows:

“Two strong wheels, sixteen feet in diameter, are made and connected together by a round axle-tree, twenty inches thick and thirty feet long; between these wheels, and with its spokes inseparably framed into their axle-tree, another wheel is placed, fourteen feet in diameter, round the rim of which a rope is several times passed, with one end fastened through the rim, and with the other end loose, but in such a condition as to produce a revolution of the wheel whenever it is pulled. This apparatus is so moved as to have the stump, on which it is intended to operate, midway between the largest wheels, and nearly under the axle-tree; and these wheels are so braced as to remain steady. A very strong chain is hooked, one end to the body of the stump, or

its principal root, and the other to the axle-tree. The power of horses or oxen is then applied to the loose end of the rope above mentioned, and as they draw, rotary motion is communicated, through the smallest wheel, to the axle-tree, on which, as the chain hooked to the stump winds up, the stump itself is gradually disengaged from the earth in which it grew. After this disengagement is complete, the braces are taken from the large wheels, which then afford the means of removing that stump out of the way, as well as of transporting the apparatus where it may be made to bear on another."

An implement devised for the underground work demanded on the Erie Canal was a peculiar plough having a very heavy blade by which the roots of the trees were cut; two yoke of oxen could draw this plough through any mesh of roots none of which exceeded two inches in diameter.

The middle section of the canal, from Rome to Lockport, was completed in 1819, twenty-seven miles being navigable in that year. By 1823 the canal was opened from Rochester to Schenectady. Water was admitted into the canal

between Schenectady and Albany in October of that year; and by September, 1824, the line was completed from Lockport to Black Rock Harbor on Lake Erie.

In evidence of what the promoters of the Erie Canal expected that highway would be to the Central West we find this interesting fact: Ohio, and even Kentucky, were called upon officially to aid in raising the funds for its building. Indeed, the commissioners in 1817 went so far as to utter a threat against the States lying on each side of New York in case they should not be willing to contribute to the building of this commercial route, which was to be for their common benefit; this consisted in a threat to charge high duties on articles transported to and from those States and the Territories of the United States. It would seem as though New York never expected to be compelled to finance, unassisted, the great work of improvement which she began in 1817. Agents went canvassing for her both in Vermont on the east and in Ohio on the west for the purpose of raising contributions

to the canal fund. Agents also were sent to the national Government at Washington, and it was believed that national aid could perhaps be secured from the sale of the public lands in Michigan, very much in the same way as the old National Road was paid for in part by the sale of lands in Ohio a decade before. Though assurances of interest and sympathy were forthcoming from the Government and from all the interested States, there is no evidence at hand to show that New York was aided to the extent of a single penny from any extraneous source. To this fact, we shall see in another chapter, may be charged the opposition of New York delegates in Congress to many government-aid propositions that came up in the era of internal improvements.

As is usually the case, the expense of this great work exceeded all the scheduled estimates; but, as has seldom if ever been the case with works of this character, the receipts from the tolls on the Erie Canal also exceeded all estimates. In only eight years following the completion of the canal the receipts from it exceeded

all estimates by nearly two and one-quarter millions of dollars, whereas the total cost of the canal, including the amount required for completion and payment of all claims at the close of the year 1824, was only \$7,700,000. Indeed, the success of the canal was so great that it was hardly completed before plans for an enlargement were necessary.

Yet on its completion a great celebration was held, which probably was the most picturesque pageant ever seen on this continent to that time. For many days previous to the completion of the work, committees in all the cities and villages throughout the route of the canal were preparing to do honor to Governor Clinton as he should make a triumphal tour from end to end in the first boat that made the journey. Looking back through the years, the scene presented of the Governor of that State sailing in a little flotilla of canal boats from Buffalo to Albany, the violent rejoicing of political friends along the route, the demonstrations and orations by the score, the transparencies, illuminations, and

jollifications, stand without a parallel in the early history of our country. At the moment when Clinton's boats weighed anchor at Buffalo, a burst of artillery sent the message eastward; cannon located along the route took up the message, and in comparatively few moments it was passed across the State to the metropolis. When Clinton reached New York, the canal boats having been towed down the Hudson, a spectacular ceremony was performed off Sandy Hook, where a keg of Lake Erie water was poured into the sea in commemoration of the wedding of the ocean and the lakes. The procession in New York City was the greatest, it is said, that had ever formed in America up to that time. The illuminations were in harmony with the whole scale of the celebration, as was true of the grand ball in Lafayette Amphitheatre in Laurens Street; here, in order to secure necessary floor space, a circus building on one side and a riding-school on the other were temporarily united to make the largest ballroom in America.



DE WITT CLINTON

Friend of the Erie Canal Project

The Erie Canal was of tremendous national importance in more ways than it is possible to trace. The hopes and dreams of its promoters were based on such sound principles, and the work they planned was so well executed, that the success of their adventure gave inspiration to hundreds of other enterprises throughout the length and breadth of the country. That was the Erie Canal's great mission. It is hardly necessary to say that the State of New York reaped a great benefit from the successful prosecution of the work. But it was not New York alone that benefited; for the Erie Canal was the one great early school of civil engineers in the United States, and in all parts of the country, from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Baltimore to the Portland Canal at far-away Louisville, Kentucky, the men who engineered New York's great canal found valuable work to do.

It is most remarkable that now, at the beginning of another century, the people of New York should be planning a new Erie Canal; and perhaps the most significant fact in

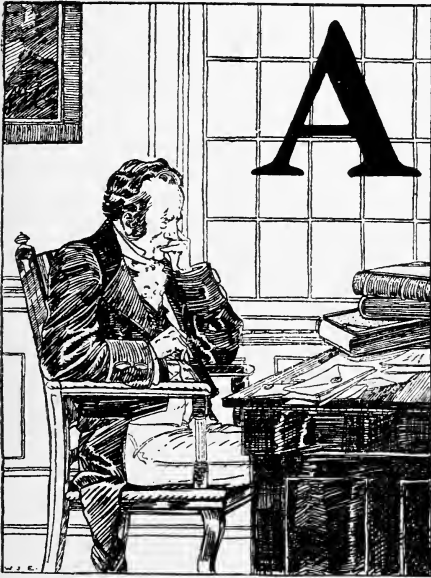
connection with the one-thousand-ton barge canal now projected is the fact that wherever rivers are available, as for instance the Mohawk, these are to be taken advantage of, showing that modern engineering science approves the early theory entertained by Washington and Morris of the canalization of rivers. The old Erie Canal cost upwards of eight millions, which was deemed an immense sum at that day. It is difficult always to measure by any monetary standard the great changes that the passing years have brought; but the new canal now to be built is to cost one hundred and one millions, which is in our time a comparatively moderate sum. The influence of the building of the old canal spread throughout the nation, and scores of canals were projected in the different States; it seems now that the influence of the promotion of the new Erie Canal will likewise be felt throughout the country. New York again leads the way.

CHAPTER IX

The Demand for Canals and Navigable Rivers. — Washington's Search for a Route for a Canal or Road to bind the East and West. — Much Money spent in the Attempt to make Certain Rivers Navigable. — Failure of the Potomac Company to improve Navigation on the Potomac. — The Need for a Potomac and Ohio Canal to withhold the Western Trade from the Erie. — The Potomac Canal Company, re-named the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. — Apparent Impossibility of building a Canal from the Potomac to Baltimore. — Philip E. Thomas conceives the Idea of a Railroad from Baltimore to the West. — The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company's Jealousy of this Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. — Both the Canal and the Railroad started. — Difficulties in the Way of Both. — The Canal's Exclusive Right of Way up the Potomac to be now shared with the Railroad. — The Railroad completed to the Ohio, 1853. — A Canal from Philadelphia to Pittsburg built rapidly. — The Alleghany Portage Railway opened for Traffic in Three Years. — Washington's Efforts to accomplish the Same End. — The Railways to a Large Extent supersede the Canals.

CHAPTER IX

THOMAS AND MERCER: RIVAL PROMOTERS OF CANAL AND RAILWAY



ALTHOUGH the Cumberland National Road proved a tremendous boon to the young West and meant to the East commercially all that its promoters hoped, other means of transportation were

being hailed loudly as the nineteenth century dawned. Improved river-navigation was one of these, and canals were another. When it was fully realized how difficult was the transportation

of freight across the Alleghanies on even the best of roads, the cry was raised, "Cannot waterways be improved or cut from Atlantic tide-water to the Ohio River?"

In our story of Washington as promoter and prophet it was seen that at the close of the Revolution the late commander gave himself up at once to the commercial problem of how the Potomac River might be made to hold the Middle West in fee. Passing westward in the Fall of 1784, he spent a month in the wilds of Northern Virginia seeking for a pathway for canal or road from the South Branch of the Potomac to the Cheat River. The result of his explorations was the classic letter to Harrison in 1784, calling Virginia to her duty in the matter of binding the East and West with those strongest of all bonds — commercial routes bringing mutual benefit.

The immediate result was the formation of the Potomac Company, which proposed to improve the navigation of the Potomac from tide-water, at Washington, D. C., to the highest practicable point, to build a road from that point

to the nearest tributary of the Ohio River, and, in turn, to improve the navigation of that tributary.

One stands aghast at the amount of money spent by our forefathers in the sorry attempt to improve hundreds of unnavigable American rivers. You can count numbers of them, even between the Mohawk and Potomac, which were probably the poorest investments made by early promoters in the infant days of our Republic. When, in the Middle Ages, river improvement was common in Europe, it was proposed to make an unnavigable Spanish river navigable. The plan was stopped by a stately decree of an august Spanish council on the following grounds: "If it had pleased God that these rivers should have been navigable, He would not have wanted human assistance to have made them such; but that, as He has not done it, it is plain that He did not think it proper that it should be done. To attempt it, therefore, would be to violate the decree of His providence, and to mend these imperfections which He designedly

left in His works." It is certain that stockholders in companies formed to improve the Potomac, Mohawk, Lehigh, Susquehanna, and scores of other American streams would have heartily agreed that it was, in truth, a sacrilege thus to violate the decrees of Providence.

With Washington as its president, however, the Potomac Company set to work in 1785 to build a canal around the Great Falls of the Potomac, fifteen miles above Washington, D. C., and blast out a channel in the rocky rapids at Seneca Falls and Shenandoah Falls. Even during Washington's presidency, which lasted until his election as President of the United States in 1788, there was great difficulty in getting the stockholders to remit their assessments. Other troubles, such as imperfect surveys, mismanagement, jealousy of managers, and floods, tended to delay and discourage. The act of incorporation demanded that the navigation from tide-water to Cumberland, Maryland, be completed in three years. Nearly a dozen times the Legislatures of Maryland and Virginia, under whose

auspices the work was jointly done, postponed the day of reckoning. By 1820 nearly a million dollars had been emptied into the Potomac River, and a commission then appointed to examine the Company's affairs reported that the capital stock and all tolls had been expended, a large debt incurred, and that "the floods and freshets nevertheless gave the only navigation that was enjoyed."

By this time the Erie Canal had been partly formed, and it was clear that it would prove a tremendous success; its operation was no longer a theory, and freight rates on merchandise across New York had dropped from one hundred dollars to ten dollars a ton. Of the many canals (which were now proposed by the score) the Potomac Canal, which should connect tide-water with the Ohio River by way of Cumberland and the Monongahela River, was considered of prime importance. Virginia and Maryland (in other words, Alexandria and Baltimore) had held, by means of the roads they had built and promoted, the trade of the West for half a century. The

Erie Canal seemed about to deprive them of it all; the Potomac Canal must restore it! So the Virginians believed, and on this belief they quickly acted. The Potomac Canal Company — soon re-named the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company — was formed, and chartered by Virginia. Maryland hesitated; could Baltimore be connected by canal with the Potomac Valley? Before this doubt was banished a national commission had investigated the country through which the proposed canal was to run, and reported that its cost (the Company was capitalized at six millions) would exceed twenty millions! The seventy miles between the Potomac and the head of the Youghiogheny alone would cost nearly twice as much as the entire capital of the Company! And soon it became clear that it was impossible to build a connecting canal between the Potomac and Baltimore.

The situation now became intensely exciting. A resurvey of the canal route lowered the previous high estimate, and the Virginians and Marylanders (outside of Baltimore) believed

fully that the Ohio and the Potomac could be connected, and that the Erie Canal would not, after all, monopolize the trade of the West. Alexandria and Georgetown would then become the great trade centres of the continental waterway from tide-water to the Mississippi basin, — in fact, secure the position Baltimore had held for nearly a century. Baltimore had been a famous market for Western produce during the days of the turnpike and “freighter”; the rise of the easy-gliding canal-boat, it seemed, was to put an end to those prosperous days. Trade already had become light; Philadelphia was forging ahead, and even New York seemed likely to become a rival of Baltimore’s.

A Baltimore bank president — whose name must be enrolled high among those of the great promoters of early America — sat in his office considering the gloomy situation. That he saw it clearly there is no doubt; very likely his books showed with irresistible logic that things were not going well in the Maryland metropolis. This man was Philip Evan Thomas, president of the

Mechanics' Bank. Before many days he conceived the idea of building a railroad from Baltimore to the West, which would bring back the trade that had been slipping away since the turnpike roads had been eclipsed by the canal. Baltimore's position necessitated her relying on roads; so far as the West was concerned there were no waterways of which she could avail herself. Railroads had been proving successful; one in Massachusetts three miles long served the purposes of a common road to a quarry advantageously. At Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, a railroad nine miles long connected a coal mine and the Lehigh River. Heavy loads could be deposited on the cars used on these roads, and on a level or on an upgrade horses could draw them with ease. If a short road was practicable, why not a long one? A three-hundred-mile railroad was as possible as a nine-mile road. Mr. Thomas admitted to his counsels Mr. George Brown; each had brothers in England who forwarded much information concerning the railway agitation abroad. On the night

of February 12, 1826, an invited company of Baltimore merchants met at Mr. Thomas's home, and the plan was outlined. A committee was appointed to review the situation critically and report in one week. On February 19 the report was made, unanimously urging the formation of a Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

The intense rivalry of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company forms of itself a historical novel. The name "Ohio" in their legal titles signifies the root of jealousy. The trade of the "Ohio country," which included all the trans-Alleghany empire, was the prize both companies would win. The story is the more interesting because in the long, bitter struggle which to its day was greater than any commercial warfare of our time, the seemingly weaker company, handicapped at every point by its stronger rival, and also held back because of the slow advance of the discoveries and improvements necessary to its success, at last triumphed splendidly in the face of every difficulty.

The first act in the drama was to hold rival inaugural celebrations. Accordingly, on July 4, 1828, two wonderful pageants were enacted, one at Baltimore and the other at Washington. At Baltimore the aged Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, laid the "cornerstone" of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. At Washington, President John Quincy Adams, amid the cheering of thousands, lifted the first spadeful of earth in the great work of digging a canal from Washington to Cumberland. The fact that the spade struck a root was in no wise considered an ill omen. Redoubling his efforts, President Adams again drove the implement into the ground. The root held stoutly. Whereupon the President threw off his coat, amid the wildest cheering, and, with a powerful effort, sent the spade full length downward and turned out its hallowed contents upon the ground. Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria were represented by dignified officials. Baltimore, so long mistress of the commerce of the West, was

now to be distanced by the Potomac Valley cities.

And it was soon seen that the Canal Company did hold the key to the situation. Having inherited the debts and assets of the old Potomac Company, it also inherited something of more value, — that priceless right of way up the Potomac Valley, the only possible Western route through Maryland for either a canal or a railroad. The railroad struck straight from Baltimore toward Harper's Ferry and the Point of Rocks, on the Potomac; the Canal Company immediately stopped its work by an injunction. The only terms on which it agreed to permit its rival to build to Harper's Ferry was that a promise should be given that the Railroad Company would not build any part of the road onward to Cumberland, Maryland, until the canal should have been completed to that point.

Could it have been realized at the time, this blow was not wholly unfortunate. There were problems before this first railroad company in America more difficult than the gaining of a

right of way to Cumberland. Every feature of its undertaking was in most primitive condition, — road-bed, tracks, rails, sleepers, ties, cars, all, were most simple. The road was an ordinary macadamized pathway; the cars were common stagecoaches, on smaller, heavier wheels. More than all else, the motor force was an intrinsically vital problem. Horses and mules were now being used; a car with a sail was invented, but was, of course, useless in calm weather, or when the wind was not blowing in the right direction. In the meantime the steam locomotive was being perfected, and Peter Cooper's "Tom Thumb" settled the question in 1830, on these tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. For a number of years the ultimate practicability of the machine was in question, but when the railroad was in a position to expand westward, in 1836, the locomotive as a motor force was acknowledged on every hand to be a success. In all other departments, likewise, the railroad had been improving. The six years had seen a vast change.

With the canal, on the other hand, these had been discouraging years. Though master of the legal situation, money came to it slowly, labor became more costly, unexpected physical difficulties were encountered, floods delayed operations. Again and again aid from Maryland had been invoked successfully; and now, in 1836, it was reported that three millions more was necessary to complete the canal to Cumberland. Maryland now passed her famous "Eight-million-dollar Bill," giving the railroad and canal each three million dollars, with a condition imposed on the Canal Company that the two companies should have an equal right of way up the Potomac to Cumberland. Though the directors of the Canal Company objected bitterly at thus being compelled to resign control of the situation, the needs of the Company were such that acquiescence was imperatively necessary. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was completed to Cumberland in 1851, at a cost of over eleven million dollars, the root of Maryland's great State debt.

The passage of this epoch-making law was the turning-point in this long and fierce conflict. It marked the day when the city of Baltimore at last conquered the State of Maryland, — when the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad mastered the situation, of which in 1832 the canal was master. The panic of 1837 delayed temporarily the sweep of the railway up the Potomac to Cumberland, but it reached that strategic point in 1842. Work on the route across the mountains was begun at various points, and the whole line was opened almost simultaneously. The first division, from Cumberland to Piedmont, was opened in June, 1851; by the next June the road was completed to Fairmount on the Monongahela River; and on the night of January 12, 1853, a banquet-board was spread in the city of Wheeling to celebrate the completion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to the Ohio River. Of the five regular toasts of the evening none was so typical or so welcome as that to the president under whose auspices this first railway had been thrown across the Alleghanies, — “Thomas Swann: standing

upon the banks of the Ohio, and looking back upon the mighty peaks of the Alleghanies, surmounted by his efforts, he can proudly exclaim, 'Veni, vidi, vici.' "

The story of the building of the Pennsylvania Canal, and later the Pennsylvania Railway, a little to the north of the two Maryland works, is not a story of bitter rivalry, but is remarkable in point of enterprise and swift success; it also shows another of the results of the successful operation of the Erie Canal.

In 1824 the Pennsylvania Legislature authorized the appointment of a commission to select a route for a canal from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. The success of New York's canal (now practically completed) impressed the Pennsylvanians as forcefully as it did Marylanders and Virginians; Philadelphia desired to control the trade of the West as much as New York or Baltimore. The earnestness of the Pennsylvanians could not be more clearly shown than by the rapid building of their canal. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal up the Potomac Valley

was over twenty-five years in building; within ten years of the time the above commission was appointed, canal-boats could pass from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. The route, at first, was by the Schuylkill to the Union Canal, which entered the Susquehanna at Middletown; this was nominally the eastern division of the Pennsylvania Canal, it having been completed in 1827. The central division extended from Middletown (later from Columbia) up the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers to Hollidaysburg. This division was completed in 1834, at a cost of nearly five and one-half millions. The western division ran from Johnstown down the Conemaugh, Kiskiminetas, and Alleghany valleys; it was completed to Pittsburg in 1830, at a cost of a little over three millions.

As stated, canal-boats could traverse this course as early as 1834, and the uninformed must wonder how a canal-boat could vault the towering crest lying between Hollidaysburg and Johnstown, which the Pennsylvania Railway crosses with difficulty at Gallitzin, more than two thousand

feet above sea-level. The answer to this introduces us to the Alleghany Portage Railway, a splendid piece of early engineering, which deserves mention in any sketch of early deeds of expansion and promotion in America.

The feat was accomplished by means of inclined planes; the idea was not at all new, but, under the circumstances, it was wholly an experiment. The plan was to build a railway which could contain eleven sections with heavy grades, and between them ten inclined planes. A canal-boat having been run into a submerged car in the basin on either side of the mountain, it could be drawn over the level by horses or locomotives, and sent over the summit, 1,441 feet above Hollidaysburg, on the inclines by means of stationary engines. The scheme was first advanced early in the history of the canal, but it was not finally adopted until 1831, and in three years the portage railway was opened for traffic. The ten planes averaged about 2,000 feet in length and about 200 feet in elevation. They were numbered from west to east. Certain of the levels were quite

long, that between Planes No. 1 and No. 2 being thirteen miles in length; the total length of the road was thirty-six miles. It was built through the primeval forests, and an aisle of one hundred and twenty feet in width (twice as wide as that made for the Erie Canal) was cleared, so that the structure would not be in danger of the falling trees which were continually blocking early highways and demolishing pioneer bridges. Two names should be remembered in connection with this momentous work, — Sylvester Welch and Moncure Robinson, the chief and the consulting engineer who erected it.

It was in October, 1834, that the first boat, the "Hit or Miss" from the Lackawanna, was sent over the Alleghany Portage Railway intact. According to a local newspaper, it "rested at night on the top of the mountain [Blair's Gap], like Noah's Ark on Ararat, and descended the next morning into the valley of the Mississippi and sailed for St. Louis." Fifty years before, to the month, the pioneer expansionist, Washington, was floundering along in Dunkard Bottom

seeking a way for a boat to do what the "Hit or Miss" did in those October days of 1834. It is a far cry, measured by hopes and dreams, back to Washington, but one feature of the picture is of great interest: in Washington's famous appeal to Governor Harrison in 1784 he said of the young West: "The Western inhabitants would do their part [in forming a route of communication]. . . . Weak as they are, they would meet us halfway." What a splendid comment on Washington's wisdom and foresight it is to record that the ten stationary engines on the Alleghany Portage Railway, which hauled the first load of freight that ever crossed the crest of the Alleghanies by artificial means, were made in the young West, in Pittsburg! The West was certainly ready to meet the East halfway when their union was to be perfected.

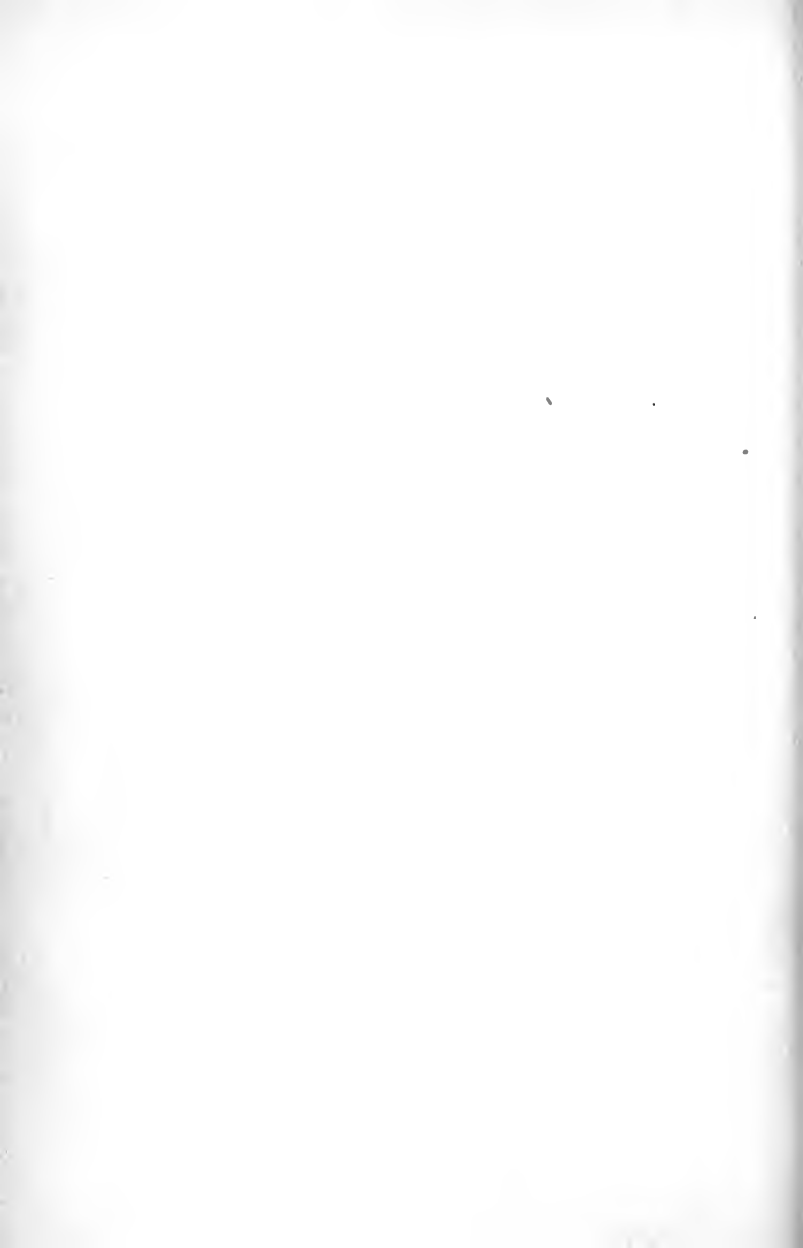
But no sooner was the Pennsylvania Canal in working order than the success of railways was conceded on every hand. At first the eastern section of the canal was superseded by the Philadelphia and Columbia Railway, a portage

railway from the Schuylkill to the Susquehanna. Then, in 1846 the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was organized. The old route was found to be the best. The advance was rapid. In two years the road was open to Lewisburg in the Juniata Valley; the western division from Pittsburg to Johnstown was also built rapidly, and in 1852 communication was possible between Pittsburg and Philadelphia, the Alleghany Portage Railway still serving to connect Hollidaysburg and Johnstown. In 1854 this cumbersome method was superseded by the railway over the mountain by way of Gallitzin.

The Pennsylvania Canal, instead of delaying the Pennsylvania Road, assisted it, for the latter was encouraged by the State, and the State owned the canal. In 1857 the railway bought both the canal and its portage railway. The latter was closed almost immediately; the canal has been operated by a separate company under the direction of the Pennsylvania Railroad. But the whole western division from Pittsburg to Johnstown was closed in 1864, and the portion

in the Juniata Valley was abandoned in 1899, and that in the Susquehanna Valley in 1900.

Two magnificent railways, standing prominent among the great railways of the world, have succeeded the old canals and that old-time Alleghany Portage Railway. But these great successes are not their richest possessions; they still own, we may well believe, that spirit which wrought success out of difficulty, — the persistent, irresistible ambition to better present conditions and overcome present difficulties, which is the very essence of American genius and the great secret of America's progress. If you wish a painting that will portray the secret of America's marvellous growth, ask that the artist's brush draw Philip Evan Thomas in his bank office at Baltimore, struggling with the problem how his city could retain the trade of the West; or draw Sylvester Welch struggling with his plans for the inclined planes of the Alleghany Portage Railway. There, in those eager, unsatisfied, and hopeful men, you will find the typical American.



CHAPTER X

Ignorance of the American People regarding the Territory called New France and that called Louisiana. — Civilization's Cruel March into Louisiana. — Lewis and Clark, Leaders of the Expedition to the Far West, already Trained Soldiers. — Its Aim not Conquest, but the Advancement of Knowledge and Trade. — Some Previous Explorers. — The Make-up of Lewis and Clark's Party. — Fitness of the Leaders for the Work. — The Winter of 1804-1805 spent at Fort Mandan. — First Encounter with the Grizzly Bear. — Portage from the Missouri to the Columbia, 340 Miles. — Down the Columbia to the Coast near Point Adams. — The Return Journey begun, March, 1806. — British Traders blamed for the Indians' Hatred of Americans. — The Americans thus driven to Deeds which made them despised by the British. — Arrival of the Explorers at St. Louis. — News of this Exploration starts the Rush of Emigrants to the West. — Zebulon M. Pike's Ascent of the Mississippi, 1805. — He explores the Leech Lake Region. — Ordered to the Far West, he reaches the Republican and Arkansas Rivers. — Sufferings of his Party travelling toward the Rio Grande. — He sets up the American Flag on Spanish Territory and is sent away. — The West regarded as the Home of Patriotism.

CHAPTER X

LEWIS AND CLARK: EXPLORERS OF LOUISIANA



WHEN the vast region known as Louisiana was purchased by President Jefferson, a century ago, the American people knew as little about it as the American colonies knew about the great territory called New France which came under English sovereignty at the end of the French War, fifty years earlier. But however great Louisiana was, and whatever its splendid stretch

of gleaming waterway or rugged mountain range, it was sure that the race which now became its master would not shirk from solving the tremendous problems of its destiny. In 1763 the same race had taken quiet possession of New France, including the whole empire of the Great Lakes and all the eastern tributaries of the Mississippi River; in the half-century since that day this race had proved its vital powers of successful exploitation of new countries. In those fifty years a Tennessee, a Kentucky, an Ohio, and an Indiana and Illinois had sprung up out of an unknown wilderness as if a magician's wand had touched, one by one, the falling petals of its buckeye blossoms. Thus, New France had been acquired by a great kingdom, but the power of assimilation lay in the genius of the common people of England's seaboard colonies for home-building and land-clearing. Soon the era of brutal individualism passed from the Middle West and the old Northwest; weak as it was, the young American Republic, in the person of such men as Richard Henderson and Rufus

Putnam, threw an arm about the wilderness, while George Rogers Clark, "Mad Anthony" Wayne, and William Henry Harrison settled the question of sovereignty with the red-skinned inhabitants of the land.

Civilization often marched rough-shod into the American Middle West, bringing, however, better days and ideals than those which it harshly crushed. After Anthony Wayne's conquest of Northwestern Indiana at Fallen Timber (near Toledo, Ohio) in 1794 the burst of population westward from Pittsburg and Kentucky to the valley of the Mississippi was marvellous; by the time of the purchase of Louisiana in 1803 the rough vanguard of the race which had so swiftly opened Kentucky and Ohio and Tennessee to the world was crowding the banks of the Mississippi, ready to leap forward to even greater conquests. What these irrepressible pioneers had done they could do again. Those who affirmed that the purchase of Louisiana must prove a failure had counted without their host.

Nothing is of more interest in the great Government expedition of exploration which President Jefferson now sent into the unknown territory beyond the Mississippi than this very fact of vital connection between the leaders of the former movement into the eastern half of the Mississippi Basin and this present movement into its tremendous western half. In a previous story we have shown that the founders of the old Northwest were largely heroes of the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars; it is now interesting indeed to note that these leaders in Far Western exploration—Meriwether Lewis and William Clark—were in turn heroes of the British and Indian wars, both of them survivors of bloody Fallen Timber, where, on the cyclone's path, Anthony Wayne's hard-trained soldiers made sure that Indian hostility was never again to be a national menace on the American continent.

The proposed exploration of Louisiana by Lewis and Clark is interesting also as the first scientific expedition ever promoted by the



MERIWETHER LEWIS

Of the Lewis and Clark Expedition



'American Government. For it was a tour of exploration only; the party did not carry leaden plates such as Céloron de Bienville brought fifty years back in those days of gold interwoven with purple, to bury along the tributaries of the Ohio as a claim to land for his royal master and the mistresses of France. There was here no question of possession; Lewis and Clark were, on the contrary, to report on the geography, physiography, and zoölogy of the land, designate proper sites for trading stations, and give an account of the Indian nations. It is remarkable that little was known of Louisiana on these heads. Of course the continent had been crossed, though not by way of the Missouri River route, which had become the great highway for the fur trade. Mackenzie had crossed the continent in the Far North, and Hearne had passed over the Barren Grounds just under the Arctic Circle. To the southward from the Missouri the Spaniards had run to and from the Pacific for two centuries. The commanding position of St. Louis showed that the Missouri route was of

utmost importance; the portage to the half-known Columbia was of strategic value, and a knowledge of that river indispensable to sane plans, commercial and political, in the future.

In May, 1804, the explorers were ready to start from St. Louis. They numbered twenty-seven men and the two leading spirits, Lewis and Clark; fourteen of the number were regular soldiers from the United States army; there were nine adventurous volunteers from Kentucky; a half-breed interpreter; two French voyageurs and Clark's negro servant completed the roster. The party was increased by the addition of sixteen men, soldiers and traders, whose destination was the Mandan villages on the Missouri, where the explorers proposed to spend the first Winter.

There is something of the simplicity of real grandeur in the commonplace records of the leaders of this expedition. "They were men with no pretensions to scientific learning," writes Roosevelt, "but they were singularly close and accurate observers and truthful narrators. Very

rarely have any similar explorers described so faithfully not only the physical features, but the animals and plants of a newly discovered land. . . . Few explorers who did and saw so much that was absolutely new have written of their deeds with such quiet absence of boastfulness, and have drawn their descriptions with such complete freedom from exaggeration."

The very absence of incident in the story is significant to one who remembers the countless dangers that beset Lewis and Clark as they fared slowly on up the long, tiresome stretches of the Missouri; surprises, accidents, misunderstandings, miscalculations, and mutinies might have been the order of the day; a dozen instances could be cited of parties making journeys far less in extent than that now under consideration where the infelicities of a single week surpassed those known throughout those three years. These splendid qualities, which can hardly be emphasized save in a negative way, make this expedition as singular as it was auspicious in our national annals. Good discipline

was kept without engendering hatred; the leaders worked faithfully with their men at the hardest and most menial tasks; in suffering, risking, laboring, they set examples to all of their party. In dealing with the Indians good judgment was used; even in the land of the fierce Dakotas they escaped harm because of great diplomacy, presenting a more bold and haughty front than could perhaps have been maintained if once it had been challenged. With all Indian nations conferences were held, at which the purchase of Louisiana from France was officially announced, and proper presents were distributed in sign of the friendship of the United States.

The Winter of 1804-1805 was spent at Fort Mandan, on the Missouri River, sixteen hundred miles from its junction with the Mississippi. In the Spring the party, now thirty-two strong, pressed on up the Missouri, which now turned in a decidedly westward direction. Between the Little Missouri and the upper waters of the Missouri proper, game was found in very great quantities, this region having been famous in that respect

until the present generation. One game animal with which white men had not been acquainted was now encountered, — the grizzly bear. Bears in the Middle West were, under ordinary circumstances, of no danger; these grizzlies of the upper Missouri were very bold and dangerous. Few Indians were encountered on the upper Missouri. Fall had come ere the party had reached the difficult portage from the Missouri to the Columbia; the distance from the Mississippi to the Falls of the Missouri, at the mouth of the Portage River, the point near which the land journey began, was 2,575 miles. The Portage to the Columbia was 340 miles in length. Having obtained horses from the Shoshones, the Indians on the portage, the explorers accomplished the hard journey through the Bitter Root Mountains.

The strange white men were received not unkindly by the not less strange Indians of the great Columbia Valley, though it needed a bold demeanor, in some instances, to maintain the ground gained. Yet on the men went down the

river and encamped for the Winter on the coast near Point Adams, — the end of a journey of over four thousand miles. Here the brave Captain Gray of Boston, thirteen years before, had discovered the mouth of the Columbia and given the river the name of his good ship. The Winter was spent hereabouts, the explorers suffering somewhat for lack of food until they learned to relish dog-flesh, the taste for which had to be acquired. By March, 1806, they were ready to pull up stakes and begin the long homeward journey.

This was almost as barren of adventure as the outward passage, though a savage attack by a handful of Blackfeet, — henceforward to be the bitter foes of Rocky Mountain traders and pioneers, — and the accidental wounding of Lewis by one of his party, were unpleasant interruptions in the monotony of the steady marching, paddling, and hunting. It is remarkable that, throughout the western expansion of the United States after the Revolution, our northern pioneers from Pennsylvania to Oregon should have

felt — in many cases bitterly — the tricky, insulting hatred of British traders and their Indian allies. As Washington in 1790 laid at the door of British instigators the cause of the long war ended by Wayne at Fallen Timber, so, all the way across the continent our pioneers had to contend with the same despicable influence, and were driven by it to deeds which made them, in turn, equally despised by their northern rivals. “I was in hopes,” wrote an early pioneer, “that the British Indian traders had some bounds to their rapacity . . . that they were completely saturated with our blood. But it appears not to have been the case. Like a greedy wolf, not satisfied with the flesh, they quarrelled over the bones. . . . Alarmed at the individual enterprise of our people . . . they furnished [the Indians] with . . . the instruments of death and a passport [horses] to our bosom.” Even at the very beginning these first Americans on the Columbia and the Bitter Root range had a taste of Indian hatred from both the Blackfeet and the Crows.

On the way back to the Mandan villages the

explorers had an experience which was by no means insignificant. As they were dropping down the upper Missouri, one day two men came into view; they proved to be American hunters, Dickson and Hancock by name, from Illinois. They had been plundered by the fierce Sioux, and one of them had been wounded; it can be imagined how glad they were to fall in with a party large enough to ward off the insults of the Sioux. The hunters did remain with Lewis and Clark until the Mandan villages were reached, but no longer. Obtaining a fresh start, the two turned back toward the Rockies, and one of Lewis and Clark's own soldiers, Colter (later the Yellowstone pioneer), went back with them. These three led the van of all the pioneer host under whose feet the western half of the continent was soon to tremble.

Holding the Sioux safely at bay during the passage down the Missouri, Lewis and Clark in September were once again on the straggling streets of the little village of St. Louis, then numbering perhaps a thousand inhabitants.

From any standpoint this expedition must rank high among the tours of the world's greatest explorers; a way to the Pacific through Louisiana, which had just been purchased, was now assured. Knowing as we do so well to-day of Russia's determined effort to secure an outlet for her Asiatic pioneers and commerce on the Pacific Ocean, we can realize better the national import of Lewis's message to President Jefferson giving assurance that there was a practicable route from the Mississippi Basin to the Pacific by way of the tumbling Columbia. Without guides, save what could be picked up on the way, these men had crossed the continent; and as the story told by returning Kentucky hunters to wondering pioneers in their Alleghany cabins set on foot the first great burst of immigration across the Alleghanies into the Ohio Basin, so in turn the story of Lewis and Clark and Gass and the others set on foot the movement which resulted in the entire conquest of the Rockies and the Great West.

But as the stories of others besides Kentuckians played a part in the vaulting of the first

great America "divide," so, too, others besides Lewis and Clark influenced the early movement into the Farthest West. One of these, who stands closest to the heroes of the Missouri and Columbia, was Zebulon M. Pike, a son of a Revolutionary officer from New Jersey, the State from which the pioneers of Cincinnati and southwestern Ohio had come. During Lewis and Clark's adventure this hardy explorer ascended the Mississippi, August, 1805, in a keel-boat, with twenty regular soldiers. The Indians of the Minnesota country were not openly hostile, but their conduct was anything but friendly. The Winter was spent at the beautiful Falls of St. Anthony, at Minneapolis. Pike explored the Leech Lake region but did not reach Lake Itasca. He found the British flag floating over certain small forts built by British traders, which he in every case ordered down. An American flag was raised in each instance, and the news of the Louisiana purchase was noised abroad. The British traders treated Pike's band with all the kindness and respect that their

well-armed condition demanded. The expedition came down the Mississippi in April, 1806, to St. Louis.

There were other regions, however, in Louisiana where the United States flag ought to go now, and General Wilkinson, who had sent Pike to the North, now ordered him into the Far West. Pike's route was up the Osage and overland to the Pawnee Republic on Republican River. His party numbered twenty-three, and with him went fifty Osages, mostly women and children, who had been captured in savage war by the Pottawattomies. The diplomatic return of these forlorn captives of course determined the attitude of the Osage nation toward Pike's company and his claims of American sovereignty over the land. And it was time for America to extend her claim and make it good. Already a Spanish expedition had passed along the frontier distributing bright Spanish flags and warning the Indians that the Spanish boast of possession was still good and would be made better. Pike travelled in the wake of this band

of interlopers, neutralizing the effect of its influence and raising the American flag everywhere in place of the Spanish.

Reaching the Arkansas, Pike ascended that river late in the Fall, and when Winter set in the brave band was half lost in the mountains near the towering peak which was forever to stand a dazzling monument to the hardihood and resolution of its leader. At the opening of the new year, near Canyon City, where deer were found wintering, a log fort was built in which a portion of the party remained with the pack animals, while Pike with twelve soldiers essayed the desperate journey to the Rio Grande.

“ Their sufferings were terrible. They were almost starved, and so cold was the weather that at one time no less than nine of the men froze their feet. . . . In the Wet Mountain Valley, which they reached in mid-January, . . . starvation stared them in the face. There had been a heavy snow-storm; no game was to be seen; and they had been two days without food. The men with frozen feet, exhausted by hunger, could no longer travel. Two of the soldiers went out to hunt

but got nothing. At the same time Pike [and a comrade] . . . started, determined not to return at all unless they could bring back meat. Pike wrote that they had resolved to stay out and die by themselves, rather than to go back to camp 'and behold the misery of our poor lads.' All day they tramped wearily through the heavy snow. Towards evening they came on a buffalo, and wounded it; but faint and weak from hunger, they shot badly, and the buffalo escaped; a disappointment literally as bitter as death. That night they sat up among some rocks, all night long, unable to sleep because of the intense cold, shivering in their thin rags; they had not eaten for three days. But . . . they at last succeeded, after another heart-breaking failure, in killing a buffalo. At midnight they staggered into camp with the meat, and all the party broke their four days' fast."¹

Pike at length succeeded in his design of reaching the Rio Grande, and here he built a fort and threw out to the breeze an American flag, though knowing well that he was on Spanish territory now. The Louisiana boundary was ill defined, but in a general way it ran up the

¹ Theodore Roosevelt, "The Winning of the West," IV, 337, 338.

Red River, passed a hundred miles northeast of Santa Fé and just north of Salt Lake, thence it struck straight west to the Pacific. By any interpretation the Rio Grande was south of the line. The Spaniards, who came suddenly upon the scene, diplomatically assumed that the daring explorer had lost his way; he suffered nothing from their hands, and was sent home through Chihuahua and Texas.

All the hopes of the purchasers of Old Louisiana and of its flag-planters have come true, and, with them, dreams the most feverish brain of that day could not fashion. History has repeated itself significantly as our standard-bearers have gone westward. When the old Northwest was carved out of a wilderness, there was no fear in the hearts of our forefathers that was not felt when Louisiana was purchased. The great fear in each case was the same — the British at the north and the Spaniard at the south. And in each case the leaven of the East was potent to leaven the whole lump. Great responsibilities steady nations as well as men; the very fact of

a spreading frontier and a widening sphere of influence — bringing alarm to some and fear to many — was of appealing force throughout a century to the conscience and honor of American statesmen. As, in the dark days of the Revolution, the wary Washington determined, in case of defeat, to lead the fragment of his armies across the Alleghanies and fight the battles over again in the Ohio Basin, where he knew the pioneers would forever keep pure the spirit of independence, so men in later years have looked confidently to the Greater West, to the Mississippi Basin and old Louisiana, for as pure a patriotism (though it might appear at times in a rough guise) as ever was breathed at Plymouth Rock.



CHAPTER XI

Fur Trade the Leading Business in the Northwest. — Rise of the Astor Family. — The U. S. Government fails as a Rival of the Northwest Company of Montreal, in the Fur Trade. — John Jacob Astor sees the Possibilities of the American Fur Trade. — He ships Furs from Montreal to London. — Irving's Opinion of Astor. — Astor plans to establish a Line of Trading-posts up the Missouri and down the Columbia. — The Scheme a Failure, but indirectly Valuable. — Astor's Enterprise helpful toward the Americanization of Louisiana. — He establishes the Pacific Fur Company, 1810. — This Company and the Northwest Company both seeking to occupy the Mouth of the Columbia; the Former arrives First. — In the War of 1812 the British take Possession of the Place. — Benefits to America from Astor's Example. — Like him, some Other Promoters failed to achieve the Particular Ends in View.



CHAPTER XI

ASTOR: THE PROMOTER OF ASTORIA



THE brave explorations of Lewis and Clark and Pike opened up the vast Territory of Louisiana for occupation and commerce. The one great business in the Northwest had been the fur trade, and for a long period it was yet to be the absorbing theme of promoters and capitalists, the source of great rivalries, great disappointments, and great fortunes.

No story of American promotion is more unique than that of the rise of the Astor family from obscurity to a position of power and usefulness, and this story has its early setting in the fur-trading camps of the Far Northwest, where Astoria arose beside the Pacific Sea. The tale is most typically American: Its hero, John Jacob Astor, was of foreign parentage; he came to America poor; he seized upon an opening which others had passed over; he had the support of a self-confidence that was not blind; he fought undauntedly all obstacles and scorned all rivalry; and at last he secured America's first princely fortune.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the fur trade of the Northwest was in the hands of the powerful Northwest Company of Montreal, a race of merchant princes about whose exploits such a true and brilliant sheen of romance has been thrown. But the United States Government was not content that Canadian princes alone should get possession of the wealth of the Northern forests, and as early as 1796 it

sent agents westward to meet the Indians and to erect trading-houses. The plan was a failure, as any plan must have been "where the dull patronage of Government is counted upon to outvie the keen activity of private enterprise." In almost every one of our preceding stories of America's captains of expansion, save that of the Lewis and Clark expedition only, a private enterprise has been our study, and each story has been woven around a personality. Even in the case of the exception noted, it was the personal interest and daring of Lewis and Clark that made their splendid tour a success, though it was promoted by the Government.

The quiet little village of Waldorf near Heidelberg, Germany, was the birthplace of John Jacob Astor, and the name is preserved to-day in the princely splendor of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The young man, who never believed that he would become a merchant prince, spent his first years in the most rural simplicity. It is marvellous how America has imperiously called upon so many distant heaths for men with a

genius for hard work and for daring dreams; it called St. Clair from Scotland, Zeisberger from Moravia, and Gallatin and Bouquet from Switzerland; and now a German peasant boy, inheriting blood and fibre, felt early in his veins this same mystic call, and saw visions of a future possible only in a great and free land. At an early age he went to London, where he remained in an elder brother's employ until the close of the Revolutionary War; now, in 1783, at twenty years of age, he left London for America with a small stock of musical instruments with which his brother had supplied him. At this time one of those strange providential miracles in human lives occurred in the life of this lad, who himself had had a large faith since childhood days; by mere chance, on the ocean voyage, or in the ice-jam at Hampton Roads, his mind was directed to the great West and its fur trade. From just what point the leading came strongest is not of great importance, but the fact remains that upon his arrival at New York young Astor disposed of his musical instruments and hastened back to

London with a consignment of furs. The transaction proved profitable, and the youth turned all his energies to the problem of the fur trade. He studied the British market, and went to the continent of Europe and surveyed conditions there. He returned to New York and began in the humblest way to found his great house. All imaginable difficulties were encountered; the fur trade had been confined almost wholly to the Canadian companies, who brooked no competition; in the Atlantic States it had been comparatively unimportant and insignificant. At the close of the war of separation England had refused to give up many of her important posts on the American side of the Great Lakes, — a galling hindrance to all who sought to interest themselves in the fur trade. Again, the importation of furs from Canada to the United States was prohibited. The young merchant soon began making trips to Montreal, at which point he purchased furs and shipped them direct to London.

In this fight for position and power young Astor showed plainly the great characteristics

of the successful merchant, — earnestness and faith. He showed, too, some of the rashness of genius, which at times is called insanity; but search in the biographies of our great Americans, and how many will you find who did not early in their careers have some inkling of their great successes, — some whisper of fortune which rang in the young heart? The successes of John Jacob Astor were not greater than some of his day-dreams. “I’ll build one day or other,” he once said to himself on Broadway, “a greater house than any of these, in this very street.” Irving writes of Astor:

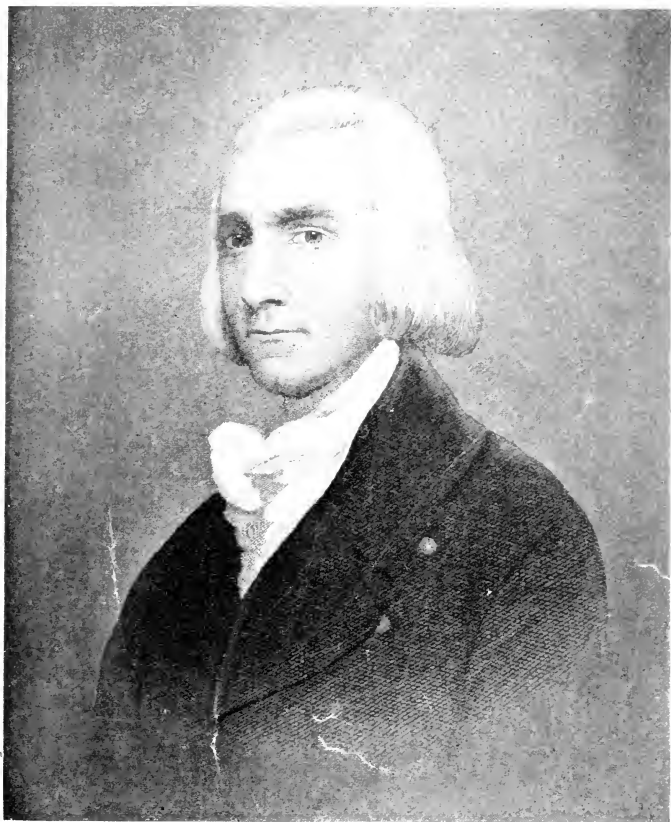
“He began his career, of course, on the narrowest scale; but he brought to the task a persevering industry, rigid economy, and strict integrity. To these were added an inspiring spirit that always looked upward; a genius, bold, fertile, and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage; and a singular and never-wavering confidence of signal success.”

It was the reports of Lewis and Clark that inspired Astor in his daring dream of securing

a commercial control of the great Northwest which, by the help and protection of the American Government, would give impetus to the expansion of the American people into a great empire. The key to Astor's plan was to open an avenue of intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and form regular establishments or settlements across the continent from one headquarters on the Atlantic to another on the Pacific. Sir Alexander Mackenzie had conceived this idea in 1793, but it involved such herculean labors that it was not attempted; the business sinews of the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company were so strong, and their long-cherished jealousies were so deep-rooted, that Mackenzie's plan of coalescence was impossible. In the meantime Lewis and Clark had found a route through Louisiana to the Pacific, and Captain Gray of Boston had anchored in the mouth of the Columbia. By land and water the objective point had been reached, and Astor entered upon the great task of his life with ardor and enthusiasm. The very obstacles in his way seemed to augment his

courage, and every repulse fired him to increased exertion.

It is a remarkable fact that at this time the principal market for American furs was in China. The British Government had awarded the monopoly of the China trade to the powerful East India Company, and neither the Hudson Bay Company nor the Northwest Company was allowed to ship furs westward across the Pacific to China. Astor planned to take full advantage of this ridiculous handicap under which the Canadian fur companies labored. He planned to erect a line of trading posts up the Missouri and down the Columbia, at whose mouth a great emporium was to be established; and to this the lesser posts which were to be located in the interior would all be tributary. A coastwise trade would be established, with the Columbia post as headquarters. Each year a ship was to be sent from New York to the Columbia, loaded with reënforcements and supplies. Upon unloading, this ship was to take the year's receipt of furs and sail to Canton, trading off its rich cargo there for merchandise; the



JOHN JACOB ASTOR

Founder of Astoria



voyage was to be continued to New York, where the Chinese cargo was to be turned into money.

It is not because of the success of this intrepid promoter that the founding of Astoria occupies such a unique position among the great exploits in the history of American expansion. His attempt to secure the fur trade was not a success; but, considering the day in which it was conceived, the tremendous difficulties to be overcome, the rivalry of British and Russian promoters in the North and Northwest, and the inability of others to achieve it, the founding of Astoria on the Columbia must be considered typically American in the optimism of its conception and the daring of its accomplishment. If there is a good sense in which the words can be used, America has been made by a race of gamblers the like of which the world has never seen before. We have risked our money as no race risked money before our day. Astor was perhaps the first great "plunger" of America; his enthusiasm carried everything before it and influenced the spread of American rights and interests. The failure

of the Astoria scheme did not check certain more fundamental movements toward the Pacific; the questions of boundaries and territorial and international rights were brought to the fore because of Astor's attempt. This promoter's lifelong enterprise was a highly important step, after the Lewis and Clark expedition, toward the Americanization of the newly purchased Louisiana; it hastened the settlement of questions which had to be faced and solved before Louisiana was ours in fact as well as on paper. Lewis and Clark found a way thither and announced to the Indian nations American possession; Astor, by means of a private enterprise, precipitated the questions of boundaries and rights which America and England must have settled sooner or later.

One of the first interesting developments of an international nature followed close upon a diplomatic manœuvre by which Astor attempted to thwart rivalry by seeking to have the Northwest Company become interested to the extent of a one-third share in his American company. The wily Canadians delayed their decision, and

at last answered by attempting to secure the mouth of the Columbia before Astor's party could reach the spot. Astor pushed straight ahead, however, and on June 23, 1810, the Pacific Fur Company was organized, with Mr. Astor, Duncan McDougal, Donald McKenzie, and Wilson Price Hunt as chief operators.

The stock in this newly formed company was to be divided into one hundred equal shares, fifty of which were to be at the disposal of Mr. Astor, the remaining fifty to be divided among the partners and associates. Mr. Astor was immediately placed at the head of the Company, to manage its business in New York. He was to furnish all vessels, provisions, ammunition, goods, arms, and all requisites for the enterprise, provided they did not involve a greater advance than four hundred thousand dollars. To Mr. Astor was given the privilege of introducing other persons into the Company as partners. None of them should be entitled to more than two shares, and two, at least, must be conversant with the Indian trade. Annually a general meeting of the Company

was to be held at the Columbia River, at which absent members might be represented and, under certain specified conditions, might vote by proxy. The association was to continue twenty years if successful; should it be found unprofitable, however, the parties concerned had full power to dissolve it at the end of the first five years. For this trial period of five years Mr. Astor volunteered to bear all losses incurred, after which they were to be borne by the partners proportionally to the number of shares they held. Wilson Price Hunt was chosen to act as agent for the Company for a term of five years. He was to reside at the principal establishment on the West coast; should the interests of the association at any time require his absence from this post, a person was to be appointed in general meeting to take his place.

The two campaigns now inaugurated, one by land and one by sea, aimed at the coveted point on the Pacific Coast. The "Tonquin" was fitted out in September, 1810, and sent under Captain Thorn around Cape Horn, and Hunt was sent from Montreal with the land expedition. The

“Tonquin” arrived at the mouth of the Columbia March 22, 1811, and on April 12 the little settlement, appropriately named Astoria, was founded on Point George. In the race for the Columbia the Americans had beaten the Canadians.

Hunt had gone to Montreal in July, 1810, and, setting out from that point by way of the Ottawa, reached Mackinaw July 22. Having remained at this point nearly three weeks, he reached St. Louis by way of the Green Bay route on September 3. The party was not on its way again until October 21, and it wintered at the mouth of the Nodowa on the Missouri, four hundred and fifty miles from its mouth. Proceeding westward in April, the party gained the Columbia on the 21st of January, 1812, after a terrible journey, and on the fifteenth of February Astoria was reached.

Astor's great plan was now well under way toward successful operation; the promoter could not know for many days the fate of either the “Tonquin” or the overland expedition. But

his resolute persistence never wavered; he fitted out a second ship, the "Beaver," which sailed October 10, 1811, for the Sandwich Islands and the Columbia. The months dragged on; there came no word from the "Tonquin"; no word from Hunt or Astoria; no word from the "Beaver"; thousands of dollars had been invested, and no hint was received concerning its safety, to say nothing of profit. Rumors of the hostility of the Northwest Company were circulated, and of their appeal to the British Government, protesting against the operation of this American fur company.

Then came the War of 1812, and the darkest days for the promoter of Astoria. In 1813, despite the lack of all good news, Astor fitted out a third ship, and the "Lark" sailed from New York March 6, 1813. The ship had been gone only two weeks when news came justifying Astor's fears for the safety of his Pacific colony. A second appeal of the Northwest Company to the British Government had gained the ear of the ministry, and a frigate was ordered to the

mouth of the Columbia to destroy any American settlement there and raise the British flag over the ruins. Astor appealed to the American Government for assistance; the frigate "Adams" was detailed to protect American interests on the Pacific. Astor fitted out a fourth ship, the "Enterprise," which was to accompany the "Adams." Now by way of St. Louis came the news of the safe arrival of both Hunt and the "Beaver" at Astoria, and of the successful formation of that settlement. Hope was high, and Astor said, "I felt ready to fall upon my knees in a transport of gratitude." Dark news came quickly upon the heels of the good. The crew of the "Adams" was needed on the Great Lakes, and the ship could not go to the Pacific. Astor's hopes fell, but he determined to send the "Enterprise" alone. Then the British blockaded New York, and the last hope of giving help to Astoria was lost. By the "Lark" Astor sent directions to Hunt to guard against British surprise. "Were I on the spot," he wrote with fire, "and had the management of affairs, I would

defy them all; but, as it is, everything depends upon you and your friends about you. Our enterprise is grand, and deserves success, and I hope in God it will meet it. If my object was merely gain of money, I should say, 'Think whether it is best to save what we can, and abandon the place; but the very idea is like a dagger to my heart.' "

The fate of Astoria is well known; McDougal, Astor's agent, fearing the arrival of a British man-of-war, capitulated, on poor financial terms, to agents of the Northwest Company, which was in occupation when the British sloop-of-war "Raccoon" arrived, November 30. On December 12 Captain Block with his officers entered the fort, and, breaking a bottle of wine, took possession in the name of his Britannic Majesty.

The failure of Astoria did not by any means ruin its sturdy promoter, though it meant a great monetary loss. Astor's fortune kept swelling with the years until it reached twenty millions; portions of it are of daily benefit to many

thousands of his countrymen in such public gifts as the Astor Library.

But these material benefits never did a greater good than the influence Astor exerted in turning the minds and hearts of men to the Northwest. In many of our stories of early American promotion the particular end in view was never achieved. No hope of Washington's (after his desire for independence) was more vital than his hope of a canal between the Potomac and the Ohio. The plan was not realized, yet through his hoping for it and advocating it both the East and the West received lasting benefits. But of the stories of broken dreams, that of Astoria stands alone and in many ways unsurpassed. The indomitable spirit which Astor showed has been the making of America. The risks he ran fired him to heartier endeavor, as similar risks have incited hundreds of American promoters since his day; he stands, in failure and in success, as the early type of the American promoter and successful merchant prince.

CHAPTER XII

Seeds of Christianity sown among the Indians by the Lewis and Clark Band. — A Deputation of Nez Percés to General Clark, requesting that the Bible be taught in their Nation. — The Methodists establish a Mission on the Willamette, but pass by the Nez Percés. — Interest in the New Field for Explorers and Missionaries is now awakened. — Marcus Whitman suited by Early Training to become an Explorer and a Missionary. — Becomes a Medical Practitioner and afterwards makes a Business Venture in a Sawmill. — His Character and Physique. — His First Trip to the West, in Company with Mr. Parker. — The Nez Percés and the Flatheads receive them gladly. — His Marriage at Prattsburg, N. Y., and Return to the West. — A Demand for Missionaries and Immigrants that Oregon may be occupied and held by the United States. — Whitman goes East to stimulate the Mission Board and to direct Immigration into Oregon. — Whitman publishes a Pamphlet on the Desirableness of Oregon for American Colonists. — Numerous Influences that brought about the Emigration of 1843. — Whitman's Outlook for the Future Prosperity of the Immigrants. — His Death and that of his Wife in the Massacre of 1847.



CHAPTER XII

MARCUS WHITMAN: THE HERO OF OREGON



THERE is probably not another example of the springing to life of the seeds of Christianity more interesting than in the case of the Lewis and Clark expedition into that far country where rolls the Oregon. To what extent the scattering of this seed was performed with any serious expectation of success is not to be discovered; but it seems that wherever that strange-looking

band of explorers and scientists fared and was remembered by the aborigines that came under its influence, so widely had there gone the legend of the white man's Saviour. The Indians heard that the white man had a "Book from Heaven" which told them the way to walk in order to know happiness and reach the happy hunting-grounds; with this race, which lived forever on the verge of starvation, the expression "happy hunting grounds" — land where there was always game to be obtained — meant far more than the hackneyed expression does to us to-day. A book giving explicit directions for reaching a place where there was always something to eat was a thing to be sought for desperately and long; they did not appreciate the argument, once advanced with no little acumen by a Wyandot Indian, that, since the Indian knew neither the art of writing nor that of book-making, the Great Spirit could never have meant them to find the way of life in a book. On the contrary, these western Indians — Flatheads and Nez Percés — held a great meeting, probably in the early Spring of

1832, and appointed two old men and two young men to go back and visit their "Father," General Clark, at St. Louis.

"I came to you," one of them is reported to have said to Clark when at last they reached St. Louis, "over a trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friend of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with one eye partly open, for more light for my people who sit in darkness. . . . I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with burdens of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them, but the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people, after one more snow, in the Big Council, that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to the other hunting ground. No white men will go with them and no white man's Book to make the way plain." Two of the four Indians died in St.

Louis, and the surviving two went West in the same caravan with George Catlin, the famous portrait painter, who included their portraits, it is said, in his collection,—Numbers 207 and 209 in the Catlin Collection of the Smithsonian Institution.

The first missionary effort in the Far West was put forth by the Methodist General Conference, which sent the Rev. Jason Lee westward, starting overland from Fort Independence in April, 1834. The mission was located seventy miles up the Willamette River, and, singularly enough, the Nez Percés, who had sent emissaries to the “men near to God,” who had the “Book from Heaven,” were passed by.

In the Spring of the same year the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, including then both Congregationalists and Presbyterians, became interested in the new field for explorers and in this strange call that had come ringing across the vast prairies and rugged mountains of the unknown West, as, in a previous study, we have noticed that the Moravian

Brethren became interested in the call that came half a century before across the Alleghanies from the Delawares on the Muskingum. Nor was the David Zeisberger, fearless, patient, and devoted, found to be wanting in the present instance, for the call came through a channel now difficult to trace to a young man who was able to endure and dare.

Two years after the beginning of the nineteenth century Marcus Whitman was born at Rushville, New York, of New England parentage, strong both morally and intellectually. His early life was spent in a typical pioneer home, where he knew the toil, the weariness, and the hearty humble joys of that era, — a home in which independence and general strength of character were formed and confirmed. The loss of his father when he was at the age of eight laid upon the shoulders of the growing lad responsibilities which made him old beyond his years. All this certainly had its part in preparing him for the sublimely humble work, as it seemed, that he was to be called upon to do;

and little could he have known that there were to come those days of agony and exhaustion which demanded all his latent accumulation of iron strength and courage of steel, — days that would demand all his stores of resourceful foresight. Whitman's education was probably indifferent,—at least it was not above the average of the day. Converted at the age of seventeen, he did not join a church until he was twenty-two, which may be taken as showing the reticent or, rather, unobtrusive character of the man. An early purpose to prepare for the ministry was thwarted by physical weakness, and the young man proceeded to study medicine in the Berkshire Medical College at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The first years of practice were spent in Canada; returning then to New York, his attention was unexpectedly absorbed in a business venture with his brother in a sawmill. How difficult it must have been for any one to read this leading aright, so seemingly adverse was it to the prescribed course that was customary among practitioners. Yet the same knowledge

of business, perhaps, would not have come to Whitman in any other way, and it was providentially to stand him in good stead.

“Dr. Whitman was a strong man, earnest, decided, aggressive. He was sincere and kind, generous to a fault. . . . He was fearless of danger, strong in purpose, resolute and unflinching in the face of difficulties. At times he became animated and earnest in argument or conversation, but in general he would be called a man of reticence. He was above medium height, rather spare than otherwise, had deep blue eyes, a large mouth, and, in middle life, hair that would be called iron-gray.”

Of Miss Prentiss of Prattsburg, New York, who soon became Mrs. Whitman, Mrs. Martha J. Lamb has said:

“She was a graceful blonde, stately and dignified in her bearing, without a particle of affectation. When he was preparing to leave for Oregon, the church held a farewell service and the minister gave out the well-known hymn:

Yes, my native land, I love thee,

.

Can I bid you all farewell?

The whole congregation joined heartily in the singing, but before the hymn was half through, one by one they ceased singing, and audible sobs were heard in every part of the great audience. The last stanza was sung by the sweet voice of Mrs. Whitman alone, clear, musical, and unwavering."

Whitman's first Western trip was a hurried tour of observation made in company with the Rev. Samuel Parker, a graduate of Williams. Leaving St. Louis in the Spring of 1835, they reached the country of the Nez Percés and Flatheads in August. It is interesting to note that these men crossed the Great Divide by way of the South Pass, concerning which Mr. Parker made an astounding prophecy, as follows:

"Though there are some elevations and depressions in this valley, yet, comparatively speaking, it is level, and the summit, where the waters divide which flow into the Atlantic and into the Pacific, is about six thousand feet above the level of the ocean. There would be no difficulty in the way of constructing a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. There is no greater difficulty in the whole distance than has already been

overcome in passing the Green Mountains between Boston and Albany; and probably the time may not be far distant when trips will be made across the continent, as they have been made to the Niagara Falls, to see Nature's wonders."

The interviews with the Indians were uniform in character, and showed that the missionaries would receive hospitality at the hands of the Nez Percés and Flatheads. Wrote Mr. Parker:

"We laid before them the object of our appointment, and explained to them the benevolent desires of Christians concerning them. We then inquired whether they wished to have teachers come among them, and instruct them in the knowledge of God, His worship, and the way to be saved; and what they would do to aid them in their labors. The oldest chief arose, and said he was old, and did not expect to know much more; he was deaf and could not hear, but his heart was made glad, very glad, to see what he had never seen before, a man near to God, — meaning a minister of the Gospel."

It took only ten days in the country of the Indians to assure the men of the rich promise offered by the field; whereupon Dr. Whitman

turned his face eastward, to make his report and be ready in the following Spring to return with reënforcements with a caravan of the American Fur Company. A great enthusiasm had seized him. He wrote to Miss Prentiss,

“I have a strong desire for that field of labor. . . . I feel greatly encouraged to go on in every sense, only, I feel my unfitness for the work; but I know in whom I have trusted, and with whom are the fountains of wisdom. . . . You need not be anxious especially for your health or safety, but for your usefulness to the cause of Missions and the souls of our benighted fellow-men.”

Dr. Whitman was married early in 1836, and the couple were driven by sleigh from Elmira, New York, to Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, where they took a canal-boat over the Alleghany Portage Railway on their way westward. Their principal companions were the Rev. Henry H. Spaulding, a graduate of Western Reserve College, — two or three years Whitman’s junior, — and wife, and Mr. William H. Gray; there were also two teamsters and two

Indian boys, whom Dr. Whitman had brought East with him. Joining the caravan of the American Fur Company at Council Bluffs, they reached Fort Laramie early in June, and the South Pass on the following Fourth of July, where six years later Fremont raised an American flag and gained the immortal name of "Pathfinder."

It is difficult to emphasize sufficiently the historic importance and significance of the advent of these women into the country beyond the Great Divide in Whitman's light wagon and cart; true, Ashley, Bridger, and Bonneville had taken wagons into the Rockies and left them there, but it was for this sturdy and determined physician to take a woman across the mountains in 1836, showing at once the practicability of a wagon road from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But the wagon seemed hardly less wonderful than the patient women in it. Rough mountaineers who had come to the rendezvous of the American Fur Company just westward of the "divide" were dumbfounded at the sight of

the first white women on whom they had laid eyes since they had reached the States; tears came to the eyes of some of them as they shook hands with the first white women that ever crossed the Rocky Mountains; Mrs. Spaulding had been very ill, and the rough devotion of these men and their Indian wives gave her new hope and courage for the work. On the other hand, "From that day," one of these men said, "I was a better man." But it was for an old trapper to see the real national significance of the advent of these women into that far-flung country. "There," he said, pointing to the women, "is something which the honorable Hudson Bay Company cannot get rid of. They cannot send these women out of the country. They had come to stay."

Dr. Whitman chose his station at Waiilatpu, near Walla Walla, Washington, while Spaulding went a hundred miles and more eastward among the Nez Percés of the Clearwater Valley. A quart of wheat brought with them, cherished as were the twelve potatoes brought around

Cape Horn by the pioneers of Astoria a quarter of a century before, was planted amid hopes and fears, and yielded, in less than a dozen years, nearly thirty thousand bushels in a season. Their few cows multiplied to a herd; gardens and orchards were laid out; a printing press and sheep were secured from the Hawaiian Islands, and upon the press was printed a code of laws, differing in no great degree from those issued in Zeisberger's sweet "Meadow of Light" on the Muskingum half a century before. Mrs. Spaulding's school numbered five hundred pupils, and a church had grown to a membership of one hundred.

It is not possible here to trace with faithfulness the brave successes now achieved, for we are seeking but one of the many lessons to be found in the Whitman story. There was labor and success for all, and trial for all as well; there were some differences of opinion among the workers, to be settled as the field grew large, for these men were independent thinkers, each one a man among his fellows. And then there

was the rivalry with the missionaries to the northward, the Catholic priests located at Vancouver and extending their influence wherever the Hudson Bay Company, in turn, extended its interests. The priests, it should be observed, had been called in by the Company to take the place of the missionary of the Church of England, whom the Company had sent home. We cannot discuss here the tangled Oregon question and the tactics of America's rivals for that beautiful stretch of country. Two things stand fairly plain in it all: to be held, Oregon must have a strong American quota of settlers, and these missionaries were on the ground when the matter was precipitated.

The conquest of Oregon was to be made, if made at all, at the hands of an army of men with broadaxes on their shoulders; not elsewhere in our national annals does this appear more clearly than in the case of Oregon. In the military sense there was no conquest to be effected; an enterprising fur company, controlled by men of principle but served by perfectly unprincipled

agents, sought the land for its wealth of skins, and would not have wished it "opened," in any sense, to the world. The case is quite parallel to the attitude of England at the close of the Old French War, described on a previous page¹; the proclamation of 1763, permitting no pioneer to erect a cabin beyond the head-springs of the Atlantic rivers, because, if populated, the land would not pour its treasures into the coffers of a spendthrift king, was as idle a selfish dream as was ever conceived with reference to Oregon by a Hudson Bay Company's *engagé*. In the case of no other distinct region in our entire domain, perhaps, was it equally plain that the first people to really occupy would be, in all likelihood, the people that would control and at last possess it. It was like so many early military campaigns in America, as, for instance, Forbes's march on Fort Duquesne and Clark's advance to Vincennes, — to reach the destination was of itself the chief hardship; for if in the case of Forbes that great

¹ See p. 46.

army could be once thrown across the Alleghanies where lay Braddock's mouldering bones, the capitulation of Fort Duquesne would be but a commonplace consequent.

What might have been the result had not this fragile missionary movement into the empire of Oregon (including, of course, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming) taken place cannot now be determined, but the rival interests were hurrying emigrants from Red River and from Canada in the full belief that to hold would mean to have. A counter action was that put forth by the American missionaries of all denominations in Oregon, chief of whom was Marcus Whitman. It seems as though some writers have believed that there can be a line drawn between what these first Americans did to promote missionary success and that done to advance what may be called American political interests in Oregon; to the present writer this seems impossible. What helped the one helped the other, whether the motive comprehended the larger interests at stake or not.

That the missionaries desired that the Americans coming into Oregon should be men of sobriety and character should not in the least argue that they did not desire them at the same time to be good patriotic citizens, eager for their country's welfare. It is hardly fair to imply that these men were poor patriots in proportion as they were good missionaries; nor can the proposition be more reasonably entertained that these brave men desired to promote emigration thither in order to secure more assistance or success in the missionary work in which they were engaged. In all these considerations the hope of missionary success was inextricably bound up with national extension and national growth. Were the mission stations to be increased, it was of national moment; were they to be decreased, it was an ominous sign so far as possible American dominion was concerned.

Unfortunate internal trouble among the missionaries, due to differences of opinion on policies and ways and means, caused the American Board to decide to eliminate a portion of the

mission stations. Just what steps were to be taken is not important to us here; the important thing is the influence of this curtailing of the work of the American missionary. Was it to strengthen or weaken America's claim to the empire of Oregon? Was it to hinder or help the occupation of the land on the part of rival spirits? Those who might hold that the question was one of missionary policy totally apart from national politics take a view of the matter in which the present writer cannot share. These men were Americans; it is difficult to believe that with the Oregon question to the front these missionaries (who were on the spot) confined their attention solely to the missionary problem heedless of the national problem, which must have embraced and included all others in any analysis.

The missionaries met to consider the order of the American Board late in the Fall of 1842. Marcus Whitman was granted leave of absence to visit the East and persuade the officers of the Board to rescind their action. Wrote one

of the missionaries of the Board immediately after Whitman's departure concerning his plan:

“I have no doubt that if his plan succeeds it will be one of great good to the mission and country. It is to be expected that a Romish influence will come in. . . . To meet this influence a few religious settlers around a station would be invaluable.”¹

This contemporary document, written just as Whitman was leaving, ought to be good evidence, first, that he had a definite errand, and, secondly, that it concerned new emigrants.

The friends of Whitman have gone very far in an attempt to maintain that he left Oregon hurriedly on the brave ride he now undertook in order to reach Washington in time to accomplish a specific political errand; if nothing more, such a sweeping assertion was sure to be called into question, and when this was done the querists were likely to be unable to keep from going to the other extreme of denying that Whitman ever

¹ Dr. Cushing Eells's letter in archives of A. B. C. F. M., Boston.

went to Washington or had any political motive in coming East.¹

A brief but careful view of the documents in the case has inclined us to the view that Whitman came East as he did in order to be in time to have a part in arousing interest in and directing the course of the large emigration that it was felt would turn toward Oregon in the Spring of 1843. We are the more inclined to this opinion for the reason that this was the most important thing by far that could have occupied the man's mind, however one views the question; what could more have benefited the mission cause than a flood-tide of American pioneers into Oregon with axes to sing that old home-loving song sung long ago in the Alleghanies, in Ohio, in Kentucky, and beyond? And what more, pray, could be done than this to advance the interests of the United States hereabouts? In point of fact the nation had depended on the conquest of Oregon by pioneers,

¹ "The Legend of Whitman's Ride," by Prof. E. G. Bourne, *American Historical Review*, January, 1901.

if it was to be conquered at all; treaties could be made and broken, but a conquest by the axe-bearing army would be final.

“The policy,” writes Justin Winsor, “which the United States soon after developed was one in which Great Britain could hardly compete, and this was to possess the [Oregon] country by settlers as against the nominal occupancy of the fur-trading company directed from Montreal. By 1832 this movement of occupation was fully in progress. By 1838 the interest was renewed in Congress, and a leading and ardent advocate of the American rights, Congressman Linn of Missouri, presented a report to the Senate and a bill for the occupation of Oregon, June 6, 1838. A report by Caleb Cushing coming from the Committee on Foreign Affairs respecting the Territory of Oregon, accompanied by a map, was presented in January and February in 1839:

“It was not till 1842 that the movements of aggression began to become prominent in politics, and immigration was soon assisted by Fremont’s discovery of

the pass over the Rocky Mountains at the head of the La Platte.¹ Calhoun in 1845 took the position that the tide of immigration was solving the difficulty and it was best to wait that issue and not force a conflict.’”

It seems perfectly certain that Whitman was concerned especially with this “tide of immigration.” He left home October 3; in eleven days Fort Hall was reached, four hundred miles away. Finding it best, he struck southward on the old Santa Fé Trail, by way of Fort Wintah, Fort Uncompahgre, and Fort Taos. From Santa Fé the course was in part by the old Santa Fé Trail to Bent’s Fort and Independence. Bent’s Fort was left January 7, 1843, but the date of reaching Westport (Kansas City), Missouri, is not definitely known; it was probably the last of January, and here he was busy for some little time helping to shape things up for the much talked of emigration of 1843. Indeed, there is evidence that he did not leave Westport until at least the 15th of February. Possibly it was here that he prepared and published a

¹ Dr. Whitman’s route, as we have seen, in 1836.

pamphlet describing Oregon, the soil, climate, and its desirableness for American colonists, and said that "he had crossed the Rocky Mountains that winter principally to take back that season a train of wagons to Oregon." The Doctor assured his countrymen that wagons could be taken to the Columbia River. "It was this assurance of the missionary," wrote one emigrant, "that induced my father and several of his neighbors to sell out and start at once for this country."¹

If this line of investigation is followed steadily with reference to Dr. Whitman's Eastern visit, the result is eminently satisfactory from any point of view. It is well and good to believe that he attempted to right the minds of some eminent men on the Oregon question, but he probably accomplished more by some plain talks with a score of frontiersmen at Westport and by his pamphlet on the subject than by visiting ten thousand men in high authority. What was to

¹ "Letter of John Zachrey," *Senate Ex. Doc. No. 37, Forty-first Congress, Third Session.*

save Oregon was the emigration movement, — the rank and file of the army with the broadaxe, — not Whitman or Webster or a President or a congressman or a hundred congressmen. This Oregon missionary was a plain, straightforward, brave, modest man, not seeking notoriety, come eastward to have a part in inducing emigration that must start, if at all, *in the Spring months*. There you have an explanation for the Winter's ride.

Pressing on eastward, Whitman went to Washington; this has been questioned because none of the public prints of the city noised abroad his coming or his presence. This proves he was not there as much as the absence of his footprints on those streets to-day proves it; so far as it indicates anything, it only shows the man was not seeking notoriety and cheap advertisement. A year afterwards, in June, 1844, the Hon. James M. Porter, Secretary of War, received a letter from Marcus Whitman which began, "In compliance with the request you did me the honor to make last winter, while in Wash-

ington, I herewith transmit to you the synopsis of a bill." Another sentence runs, "I have, since our interview, been," etc.,¹ making, in all, two definite statements in his own hand to the effect that Whitman visited the Secretary of War in Washington, and that while there he talked with the Secretary of War concerning the national character of the Oregon movement. Any who might incline to the view that Whitman came East solely on a mission errand must pay small attention to this letter, which proves that the Secretary of War and Whitman must have talked of a bill relative to Oregon emigration. Whitman certainly conversed with Porter along the lines of their subsequent correspondence, which resulted in the missionary's sending in a bill authorizing the President of the United States to establish a line of

"agricultural posts or farming stations, extending at intervals from the present and most usual crossing of the Kansas River, west of the western boundary of the State of Missouri, thence ascending the Platte River

¹ Letter file, office of Secretary of War, received June 22, 1844.

on the southern border, thence through the valley of the Sweetwater to Fort Hall, and thence to settlements of the Willamette in the Territory of Oregon. Which said posts will have for their object to set examples of civilized industry to the several Indian tribes, to keep them in proper subjection to the laws of the United States, to suppress violent and lawless acts along the said line of the frontier, to facilitate the passage of troops and munitions of war into and out of the said Territory of Oregon, and the transportation of the mail as hereinafter provided.”

Whitman reached Boston probably March 30. There seems to be no question that his chief errand here with the officers of the American Board was to interest them in a plan to induce emigration for the sake of preserving the missions. On his return to Oregon he wrote Secretary Greene of the Board:

“A [Catholic] bishop is set over this part of the work, whose seat, as the name indicates, will be at Walla Walla. He, I understand, is styled Bishop of Walla Walla. It will be well for you to know that from what we can learn, their object will be to colonize around them. I cannot blame myself that the plan I

laid down when I was in Boston was not carried out. If we could have had good families, say two and three together, to have placed in select spots among the Indians, the present crisis, which I feared, would not have come. Two things, and it is true those which were the most important, were accomplished by my return to the States. By means of the establishment of the wagon road, which is due to that effort alone, the immigration was secured and saved from disaster in the Fall of forty-three. Upon that event the present acquired rights of the U. States by her citizens hung. And not less certain is it that upon the result of immigration to this country the present existence of this mission and of Protestantism in general hung also. It is a matter of surprise to me that so few pious men are ready to associate together and come to this country, when they could be so useful in setting up and maintaining religious society and establishing the means of education. It is indeed so that some of the good people of the East can come to Oregon for the double purpose of availing themselves of the Government bounty of land and of doing good to the country."

This quotation undoubtedly contains in outline the fundamental purpose of Dr. Whitman's journey eastward through the Winter's snows;

the American missions in Oregon were evidently on the point of being actually crowded out by the threatened emigrants from the North; to hold the ground gained, a rival emigration from the States was an imperative necessity, and that was the thing for which Whitman was working. So closely bound were the real interests, then, of the missions and the territorial interests of the United States, that for one to attempt a technical separation is to do an injustice to both. Read as widely as you will the few manuscripts left us in Dr. Whitman's hand, and the impression grows stronger with each word that the man was exceptionally clear-sighted and sane; and while a great deal of nonsense is and has been put into circulation about him, so far as Whitman himself is concerned we find his attention given to roads and trails, forage and provisions, axle grease and water; in all he wrote (and there is sufficient for a very fair guess at his purpose and plans) we find almost no reference whatever to the greater national work which he was actually doing,—a fact that

cannot but be forever enjoyed by those to whom his splendid life work will appeal.

On May 12 Whitman was again in St. Louis writing Secretary Greene, "I hope no time will be lost in seizing every favorable means of inducing good men to favor the interest of the Oregon." We should say here that, while in Boston, Whitman induced the officers of the American Board to rescind their action abolishing certain of the mission stations in Oregon. Now once more on the frontier, Whitman found that his hope of a large American emigration to Oregon was in a fair way of being realized; as George Rogers Clark came back to Virginia from Kentucky at an opportune moment to urge Patrick Henry to authorize the far-famed Illinois campaign, so now Marcus Whitman had come East at an opportune moment to add what weight he could in the interests of an Oregon campaign. But as in the case of Clark's visit to Virginia, so now, far more important causes had been at work to bring the desired result than the mere coming of a messenger. It would indeed be impossible

to estimate the large number of forces that had been at work to bring about the famous emigration of 1843, but among them should be remembered the long debates in Congress on the Ashburton Treaty, the Linn Bill concerning Oregon lands, Greenhow's "Memoir," and Lieutenant Wilkes's report, as well as the missionary efforts of the various denominations, and the Whitman pamphlet, before referred to.

As a result, as singular and interesting an army as ever bore the broadaxe westward now began to rendezvous in May near Independence, Kansas, just beyond the Missouri line. It would probably have gathered there to go forth to its brave conquest though there had been no Marcus Whitman or Daniel Webster, or any other man or set of men that ever lived; the saying that Whitman "saved Oregon" is just as false as the saying that Washington was the "Father of his Country," or that Thomas was the "Rock of Chickamauga," or Webster the "Defender of the Constitution" — and just as true; it is a boast, a toast, an idle fable to those who

disbelieve it, a precious legend of heroism and magnetism to those who glory in it. On the 18th of May a committee of the emigrants was appointed to go to Independence and inquire of Whitman concerning the "practicability of the road," as one of the party (George Wilkes) wrote; another pioneer (Peter H. Burnett) said that on the twentieth he attended a meeting with Colonels Thornton and Bartleson, Mr. Rickman and Dr. Whitman, at which meeting rules and regulations for the "Oregon Emigrating Society" were adopted. There is no doubt that Whitman's advice was of considerable importance. Any man who had taken a wagon over the Rockies would have been of prime importance to these emigrants, irrespective of any other considerations. On the 22d of May the vanguard of the army started, with John Gant as guide, and the Kansas River was reached on the 26th, and wholly crossed on the last day of May. On the 30th of May we find him writing to Secretary Greene in the following strain:

“You will be surprised to see that we are not yet started. Lieutenant Fremont left this morning. The emigrants have some of them just gone, and others have been gone a week, and some are yet coming on. I shall start to-morrow. I regret I could not have spent some of the time spent here in suspense with my friends at the East.

“I have only a lad of thirteen, my nephew, with me. I take him to have some one to stay with Mrs. Whitman. I cannot give you much of an account of the emigrants until we get on the road. It is said that there are over two hundred men besides women and children. They look like a fair representative of a country population. Few, I conclude, are pious. Fremont intends to return by land, so as to be back early in winter. Should he succeed in doing so we may be able to send you an account of the Mission and country at that time. We do not ask you to become the patrons of emigration to Oregon, but we desire you to use your influence that, in connection with all the influx into the country, there may be a fair proportion of good men of our own denomination who shall avail themselves of the advantages of the country in common with others. Also that ministers should come out as citizens or under the Home Missionary Society. We think agents of the Board and of the Home Missionary Society, as also ministers and

good men in general, may do much to send a share of good, pious people to that country. We cannot feel it to be at all just that we do nothing, while worldly men and Papists are doing so much. . . . I wish to say a few words about manufactures in Oregon, that I may remove an impression that they cannot compete with the English. First, let us take the operatives and the raw material from the Pacific Islands. It matters not at how much labor the Islander cleans the cotton, for it gives him employment, and for that he gets goods, and then for his coffee and sugar and salt and cotton, etc., etc., he gets goods also. This is all an exchange trade that only a population and manufacturers in Oregon can take advantage of, because they alone will want the articles of exchange which the Islander can give. The same will hold good in relation to Indians whenever they shall have sheep, and I intend to try and have the Government give them sheep instead of money, a result not likely to be delayed long. A good man or company can now select the best mill sites and spots, and likely would find a sawmill profitable at once. I think our greatest hope for having Oregon at least part Protestant now lies in encouraging a proper intention of good men to go there while the country is open. I want to call your attention to the operation of Farnham of Salem and the Bensons of New York in Oregon. I

am told credibly that secretly Government aids them with the secret service fund. Captain Howard of Maine is also in expectation of being employed by Government to take out emigrants by ship should the Oregon Bill pass."

Those who love the memory of this brave missionary must hold this letter exceedingly precious; it has, in addition to its enthusiasm and patriotism, that sane and practical outlook on the future that pervades so much of Washington's writings, especially the letters to William Crawford. Here is another man looking, on the Pacific slope, for such important commonplace things as mill sites in 1843, just as Washington was looking for mill sites in the Ohio Valley in 1770, and between the two it would be difficult to say which was the more seriously optimistic, though the influence of both must have been strong, in their respective days, on the advancing pioneer.

For all the daring of the hardy Winter's journey that Whitman made¹ we look upon this

¹ Friends of Whitman have unfortunately exaggerated this Winter's ride; though a daring feat, it has many parallels in the annals of the

other journey, with this splendid army of nearly a thousand Oregon pioneers and home-builders, as the one of supremest importance. Ay, here was Whitman's Ride, — not sung, perhaps, so widely as the one in the Winter's snows, and yet the one ride which Oregon could not have missed, and the one she can never forget! Let the fruitless debate go on as to the exact measure of this unpretentious missionary's influence in shaping Government policies and moulding public opinion; it is enough for me to know that he viewed the whole question as keenly as his few letters prove he unquestionably did, and then to know that when the great emigration started he was there to direct and inspire; that he could do the humblest duty and say the least about it, and at the same time show Fremont where to go if he would gain the immortal title of "Pathfinder."

Whitman has suffered at the hands of his friends, who have been over-jealous touching

old Salt Lake Trail, on which Jim Bridger built the fort that bore his name as early as 1837.

matters concerning which his own lovable modesty and reticence would not allow him to speak; they have made claims and inferences unwarranted by the known facts of the case. His Winter's ride has been compared with Sheridan's from Winchester, and tasted no better in some mouths than does the ballad of Sheridan's Ride in the mouths of Crook's men, who knew their leader had, an hour back, given and carried out the order Sheridan is said (in the poem) to have given when he dashed upon the scene, when, in fact, he merely came to Crook and asked him what he had done.¹ And yet Reid's poem is as true to the spirit of the indomitable Sheridan as Butterfield's is true of Whitman.

We have compared Whitman on the Walla Walla to Zeisberger on the Muskingum; and the terrible massacre of November 29, 1847, in which the brave hero of Oregon, with his wife and twelve others, gave their lives, belongs in history with the awful Gnadenhütten tragedy. The murder of these brave pioneers

¹ The report of a worthy eyewitness of the Thirty-sixth Ohio.

by Indians, to whom they had given the best of their lives and all their strength and prayers, is quite as fiendishly incongruous as the destruction of the Moravian band of corn-huskers by frenzied Monongahela frontiersmen; in each case the murderers knew not what they did.

But Whitman's work was done, for we have it in his own hand that he would be contented if posterity would remember, not that he had influenced a President or a Congress or saved an Empire, but merely, as he wrote, that he was

“one of the first to take white women across the mountains and prevent the disaster and reaction which would have occurred by the breaking up of the present emigration, and establishing the first wagon road across to the border of the Columbia.”¹

And yet when you study this boast you will find that it contains in its essence all that any boast for Whitman could hold; for it was an

¹ Whitman to Secretary Greene, Nov. 1, 1843; Mowry, *Marcus Whitman*, 267.

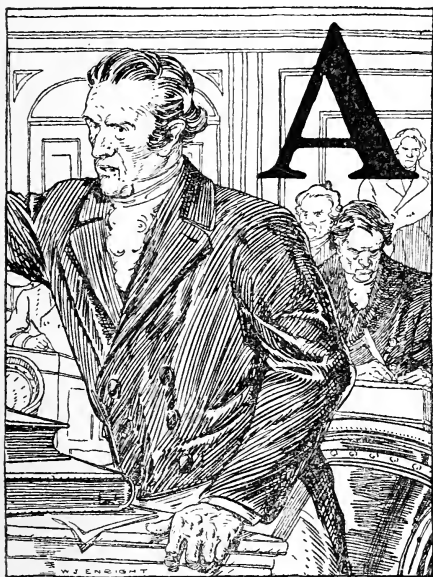
army of axe-bearers that was to save Oregon; and if Meade won Gettysburg or Wolfe captured Quebec, then Whitman and the Americans who went in his track won for America the northern Pacific slope.

CHAPTER XIII

Captains of American Expansion always to be found in the National Legislature. — Great National Advance in the Second and Third Decades of the Nineteenth Century. — Definition of “The American System.” — The Doctrine that Public Surplus should be used for Internal Improvements held for only a Short Time. — Party Struggles regarding Cumberland Road Legislation. — Inconsistent Resolutions of Congress on this Matter. — The Drift of Public Sentiment toward putting Works of Improvement under the Care of the Government. — Numerous Competitors for National Aid toward Local Improvements. — Mutual Jealousy of Various Localities with Regard to the Distribution of Government Aid. — Disputes as to the Comparative Usefulness of Canals and Railroads. — Polk’s Sarcasm on the Abuse of the Word “National” as applied to the Route of a Proposed Road from the Lakes to the Gulf. — Several Beneficial Measures passed by Congress in Spite of Strong Opposition. — Sums granted for Education, Road-building, and Canal-building. — Beneficial Influence of the Government’s Liberal Gifts as Encouragement to States and to Private Investors.

CHAPTER XIII

PILOTS OF "THE AMERICAN SYSTEM"



AS we have reviewed from a more or less personal standpoint some of the exploits which definitely made for the growth and expansion of the young American Republic, it may have occurred to the

reader that here was another great power at work helping, encouraging, and guiding the movement, — Pilots of the Republic in the halls of national legislation at Washington.

Not that we refer specifically to any one man; some men, like Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, can be pointed to at certain periods as men who occupied this position, who in a sense fathered, against all opposition, great measures that we see now were of tremendous advantage; if the position was abdicated by one man it was filled by another; and so down through the century and a quarter of our national existence there has been a power at work in our councils that has been optimistic, and at the same time true to the genius of America's geographical position and her high calling among the nations of the earth. It is not because this has been marvellously illustrated since the outbreak of the Spanish-American War that reference is made to it here, though the illustration is apposite and fair; but if we look back down the decades from the day that Congress signed that contract with Rufus Putnam and his Revolutionary patriots, or the day when Jefferson dared to effect the Louisiana Purchase, we shall continually find men sitting in the Congressional seats at the capital

who had the courage to try new paths, to assume common-sense views of the Constitution, and who believed in their country and wished to see it shirk no great responsibility. Such men as these were as truly captains of our expansion as was Putnam or Henderson or Astor.

The age in our history to which our attention is turned on this subject is more particularly that lying between the beginning of the second and the ending of the third decade of last century. Much that was proposed before the opening of the nineteenth century, in the way of material national advance, was forgotten in the taxing days of 1811–1815. Chief among these was the Erie Canal proposition, and it is perhaps not too much to say that had the war with England not come as it did, possibly the Government would, by means of the money accruing from the sale of Michigan lands, have invested in the Erie Canal project; the Cumberland Road was one of the great works that went on despite the war. The moral effect of the victories of Perry and Jackson, one to the north

and the other to the south, was very great; with the triumphant ending of the war the little victorious nation sprang into a strength and a passion for power that well-nigh frightened those acquainted with the policy and conservatism of the ante-bellum days.

We have touched slightly on one of the great questions of this most wonderful period of American history, that of the constitutionality of the appropriations for the Cumberland Road, and Henry Clay's championship of the measure. But this was only one of a score of propositions in a campaign of internal improvements, and Clay was but one of a hundred champions who assisted a weak nation to take on the elements of strength by encouraging agriculture and manufactures, and binding a far-flung land by means of communication and intercourse.

At the beginning of the second generation in the century the problem of internal improvements came to the fore as on no previous occasion, backed by the strongest men then in the public eye, — Clay, Calhoun, Adams, and Webster.



PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK

The Cumberland Road had been making its way westward, but had not yet thrown its tawny length over the Ohio River and into the States beyond. But the argument for this great national work was not to be gainsaid, for the original compact with Ohio had been reiterated on the admission of Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, respectively, and a part of the sales of the public lands in those States was already pledged to this object. As one of the fruits of the much discussed "American System," championed by Henry Clay, the Cumberland Road was a popular success, though there was never a time when any measure concerning it could not secure a strong following in the House and the Senate.

The American System stood for a use of the public surplus for works of internal improvement; it was not a popular policy for a long time, but while in vogue it was of immeasurable benefit to the expanding country, its champions being veritable captains of the country's advance. The most interesting features of the history of

this doctrine are the vehemence with which it was advocated for a few critical years when nothing else would have equally aided the national advance, the questionable basis on which the doctrine rested, and the readiness with which it was abandoned when its providential mission was effected. Even before the real internal improvement era came it was foreshadowed by the historic position of the two parties toward the object, as shown in Cumberland Road legislation. The bitterness of the struggle could not be shown better than by the repudiations of Congress in 1817 in its votes on this subject. In that year Congress passed the following inconsistent resolutions: (1) Congress has the power to build public roads and military roads, and to improve waterways; (2) Congress has *not* power to construct post roads or military roads; (3) Congress has *not* power to construct roads or canals to carry commerce between the States; (4) Congress has *not* power to construct military roads. "Thus we see," said a triumphant enemy of the so-called American System,

“by the solemn decision of this House in 1817, all power over this subject was repudiated in every form and shape.” Despite these inconsistencies the movement was ever a forward movement, until at last, in 1824, it assumed gigantic proportions, alarming to some degree the very men who had urged it forward.

The revenue of the Government at this time was about twenty-five millions, and the running expenses — including interest on the slight remaining debt — about half that sum. To what better use could the ten or twelve surplus million dollars be devoted than to the internal improvement of the land, as Gallatin and Jefferson had advocated twenty years before? Here the contest shifted to the tariff, a reduction of which would do away with the necessity of finding a way to employ a surplus. The drift of public sentiment, however, was largely in favor of turning the fostering care of the Government to works of improvement, either by direct appropriation, or by taking stock in local companies, or by devoting to their use the proceeds

of the sale of public lands; in any way the result would be the same, and the nation as a whole would feel the benefit.

The policy swept a large part of the country like wildfire, and ten thousand dreams, many of them chimerical to the last degree, were conceived. As a rule the result was, without question, bitter disappointment; but amid all the dangers that were in the way, and all the possibilities of untold harm, an influence was put to work that did more for the awakening of the young land than anything that had ever preceded it. Over a hundred and twenty-five claimants for national aid were considered by squads of engineers sent out by the Government. In the sarcastic words of one of the opposers of the system (and on this subject there was a chance for sarcasm that seldom came to Congressmen) every creek and mill-race in the United States was being surveyed by engineers sent out by the chief executive. It was asserted, and not without some plausibility, that such surveying expeditions were used very craftily to

influence votes, being sent to view rivers and roads in disputed regions where the information was circulated that, unless the champions of internal improvement were put in power, great local blessings would be lost to these districts.

But this was not by any means the chief danger in the campaign. As was most forcefully argued by the opposition, the influence of this paternal policy on the part of the Government would be to awaken hostility and set one part of the nation against the other, for in no way could the division of the surplus be made equal. It could not be made on the basis of population even if this were admitted to be constitutional, for some parts of the country needed help far more than others; a naturally impregnable harbor did not need a fourth of the money expended on it that a comparatively defenceless harbor did. Again, the division could not, for the same reason, be made on the basis of receipts; the States of the seaboard, in which the great part of the Government's revenue was raised, would then be almost the only

beneficiaries; the West would receive nothing. The accusation of favoritism came with piercing force. Suppose, for instance, New York and Mississippi should come at the same time to Congress, the one asking for the improvement of the Erie Canal, and the other for the improvement of the Mississippi River. Which party would Congress listen to if the public treasury was not in a position to satisfy both applicants? It was urged that this procedure destroyed the whole principle of representative responsibility. Take the case of New York and her great canal, — the most important material improvement in the fifty years of the nation's life; New York came to the Government when the project was first broached, asking for aid. The cause was a good one; in peace it would be a benefit to at least six States, and in war it would be a national advantage of untold moment; in fact, as we have seen, the possibility of another war with England along the Lakes was the very argument that turned the scale and caused the canal to be built. The

project was discouraged at Washington, and not a cent of Government treasure went into the undertaking. Why now, a score of years later, should New York representatives vote money from the national treasury for objects no less national or needful than the Erie Canal? Several neighboring States (Ohio, for instance) had declined to invest funds in the Erie Canal venture when it was first promoted; why now should New York representatives vote national funds (such a large part of which came from New York ports) for improvements in these States, whose delegates in Congress refused aid to the Erie Canal in its dark hours? On the other hand it was urged that even the Erie Canal, the most famous work of internal improvement promoted by any of the States, had done "nothing toward the extinguishment of its debt," up to 1830; if this great work did not reimburse the treasury which built it, though operated by a purely local authority well acquainted with all conditions and able to take advantage of all circumstances, how would it be with works promoted by the national

Government, in distant parts of the country, with little or no knowledge of local circumstances or conditions? Another argument, more powerful than was realized at the time, was that which prophesied the swift advance of the locomotive and the railroad, and the consequent decay and disuse of the common road and the canal. Said a member of Congress in debate on the floor of the House, "The honorable gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Mercer, the father of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal], Sir, must hear the appalling, the heartrending fact, that this mighty monument [the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal] which, for years, he has been laboring with zeal and exertion to erect to his memory, and which, no doubt, he had fondly hoped would transmit his name down to the latest posterity, must fall, and must give place to the superior improvement of railroads."

On the proposed national road from Buffalo to New Orleans by way of Washington the opposition poured out its vials of sarcasm and ridicule. To the arguments of the friends of

the measure, that the road was needed as a commercial and military avenue and for the use of the Post-office department, the reply was a denial so sweeping, from such reliable and informed parties, that there was no hope for the measure. Perhaps the strongest argument for the negative was advanced by James K. Polk, who was little less than withering in his fire, piling up ridicule on top of sarcasm to a degree seldom seen in Congress. Polk found that twenty-one routes between Washington and Buffalo had been outlined by engineers for this road "in the rage for engineering, surveying, reconnoitring, and electioneering." He alleged that the entire population in a space of territory one hundred miles in width between the two cities had been made to expect the road, and the surveys had been conducted in the heat of a political campaign. "The certain effect of this system, as exemplified by this road, is, first, to excite hopes; second, to produce conflicts of section arrayed against section; and lastly, dissatisfaction and heart-burnings amongst all who

are not accommodated." The speaker exhausted his keen-edged sarcasm on the word "national" and the uses to which the word was put by the defenders of the improvement bills. He affirmed that he was sure a number of men who proposed to support the Buffalo-New Orleans Road Bill would not consider it sufficiently "national" if it were known that it was not to pass through their districts; he affirmed that every catfish in the Ohio River was a "national" catfish as truly as the Cumberland Road was a national road; he challenged the friends of the bill to decide definitely upon a route for the proposed road from the Lakes to the Gulf, and then hold true to the measure representatives from districts through which the road was not to pass. Polk affirmed that the many various surveys were made merely to ally with the friends of the measure the representatives of all districts touched by these alternative courses. "This same national road was mounted as a political hobby in my district," said the Tennessean; "for a time the people seemed to be carried away with the prospect

of having millions of public money expended among them. We were to have a main route and cross routes intersecting the district in every direction. It was to run down every creek, and pass through almost every neighborhood in the district. As soon as there was time for reason to assume her seat the delusion passed off."

These points of opposition to the improvement campaign have been outlined at some length to show the strength of the opposition and the ground it took. No measure went through Congress for any kind of Government aid without the strongest kind of opposition; in fact, the Virginia delegates worked and voted against the Dismal Swamp Canal in their own State in order to be consistent with their oft-expressed views on such questions. Yet, one by one, a considerable number of important measures of internal improvement went through Congress and received the signatures of the different Presidents; the effect of these measures was inestimably beneficial, giving a marked impetus to national development, and awakening in men's minds a

dim conception of the growth that was to be the one great wonder of the century.

From the adoption of the Constitution to the year 1828 the following sums were granted by the general Government for purposes either of education or road-building or canal-building: Maine, \$9,500; New York, \$4,156; Tennessee, \$254,000; Arkansas, \$45,000; Michigan, \$45,000; Florida, \$83,417; Ohio, \$2,527,404; Illinois, \$1,725,959; Indiana, \$1,513,161; Missouri, \$1,462,471; Mississippi, \$600,667; Alabama, \$1,534,727; Louisiana, \$1,166,361. In addition to this the Government built, or assisted in building, five great works of improvement from among the scores that were proposed. For the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal \$300,000 was advanced; for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, \$10,000; for the Dismal Swamp Canal, \$150,000; for the Louisville and Portland Canal, \$90,000; for the Cumberland Road, \$2,230,903; for western and southwestern State roads, \$76,595, making a total appropriation of \$13,838,886.

The danger of the system was in making the national purse an object of plunder for Congressmen, and the consequent danger of unholy alliances and combinations for looting the public treasury. It is interesting that for so long a period as it was in vogue there were so slight symptoms of this sort of thing; and men little knew that, by acting on liberal lines at the time, despite the dangers and risks, they were exerting a power to shape the new nation, to incite private investment, to encourage State and private works of promotion, and to aid the commercial awakening of a people to an activity and an enterprise whose possibilities cannot at the present day be estimated. Take the Portland Canal around the historic "falls of the Ohio" at Louisville; this was a work for no one State in particular to perform, not even Kentucky; it was a detriment to Louisville itself, for it destroyed the old portage business, as the Erie Canal ruined the overland carrying trade between Schenectady and Albany. All the States bordering on the Ohio were benefited by this improvement, as was equally true

respecting the Government's improvement of the Ohio River itself, which began in 1825. The Portland Canal was one of the important investments which tended to prove the financial benefit of such investments. The Government's total subscription of stock was \$233,500; when the affairs of the Company were closed in 1874 by the purchase of the canal by the Government, it was found that the national profit (in mere interest) had been \$257,778. This was due to exorbitant tolls charged by the Company, which resulted, finally, in the purchase of the canal and throwing it open toll-free.

The men who labored for this era of improvement are practically unknown, with the exception of two or three who became prominent because of special ability or renown gained in other lines of activity, like Clay and Calhoun. It is not important here to attempt to catalogue them; the work they did by voting for the so-called American System was of critical importance; but, still greater, in so doing they were showing a braver, more optimistic, more American spirit

and a high faith in the fundamental good judgment of the people. It was, without doubt, a dangerous extreme to approach, possible of wanton violation in unprincipled hands, and a precedent of very questionable tendencies. But it was of immeasurable importance that such moral support as just such acts as these afforded should have come at just this time; and, could we read the result aright, it would be seen, possibly, that much of our commercial success found its origin at this very moment, and came into being because a number of men at this crucial time gave an impetus to private adventure and private investment that was almost providential in its ultimate effect on our national life. Losing their individual identity in the common promotion of temporary measures of infinite national advantage, they will be remembered only in a vague, impersonal way as men who honored their country by trusting in its destiny and believing in the genius of its growth.



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